

GUARDIAN of the CLOAK

In Defence of al-Būṣīrī's Ode al-Burdah

يَا أَكْرَمَ الْخَلْقِ مَا لِي مِنَ الْوَدَّاعِ
سِوَاكَ عِنْدَ خُلُوفِ الْعَمَامِ الْعَمَمِ

فَارٌّ مِنْ جُودِكَ الْكَافِيَا وَصَرَّتْهَا
وَمِنْ عُلُومِكَ عِلْمُ اللُّوجِ وَالْقَلَمِ

Shaykh Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān
al-Naqshabandī al-Baghdādī

Translation, Notes and Appendices by
Amjad Mahmood

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Translated by: Amjad Mahmood

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Transliteration Table

ء	' (A distinctive glottal stop made at the bottom of the throat.)	ط	ṭ (An emphatic t pronounced behind the front teeth.)
ا	a, ā	ظ	ẓ (An emphatic th, like the th in <i>this</i> , made behind the front teeth.)
ب	b	ع	ʿ (A distinctive Semitic sound made in the middle of the throat, sounding to a Western ear more like a vowel than a consonant.)
ت	t	غ	gh (A guttural sound made at the top of the throat, resembling the untrilled German and French r.)
ث	th (Pronounced like the th in <i>think</i> .)	ف	f
ج	j	ق	q (A guttural k sound produced at the back of the palate.)
ح	ḥ (Hard h sound made at the Adam's apple in the middle of the throat.)	ك	k
خ	kh (Pronounced like the ch in Scottish <i>loch</i> .)	ل	l
د	d	م	m
ذ	dh (Pronounced like the th in <i>this</i> .)	ن	n
ر	r	و	ū, u, ū
ز	z	ي	y, ī, ī
س	s		
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ (An emphatic s pronounced behind the upper front teeth.)		
ض	ḍ (An emphatic d-like sound made by pressing the entire tongue against the upper palate.)		

Translator's Introduction

THE COMPOSITION AND recitation of elegant poetry in eulogy of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has always been one of the most important expressions and manifestations of love for him by the Community. This has been the case from his time up to now; and there is no poet as renowned as Imam al-Būṣīrī in this genre of poetry, and no poem dedicated to eulogy of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as celebrated and cherished by the Muslims like his *Qasidah al-Burdah*. For several centuries, it has been recited in various melodies across the Muslim world; mosques, homes and tombs of luminaries have been adorned with its verses; and countless scholars have written commentaries on it, without a single noteworthy objection from anyone of repute, in spite of its prevalence. On the contrary, we find that the foremost scholars of the ummah commentated on its verses, adding their own interlinear verses to it, composing odes in imitation of it and taking pride in attaining licenses (*ijāzās*) in narrating it.

It is only since the latter part of the eighteenth century, after the rise of the reformist Wahhabi movement from the Najd, led by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, that we begin to find a sudden surge of allegations of apostasy and *kufr* levelled against Imam al-Būṣīrī from Wahhabi adherents. These outrageous accusations—that, unfortunately, persist in our time, in both the Muslim world and the West—have included comparing the author to the idolaters, because of his words ‘O noblest of creation, I have no one to take refuge in other than you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls’; and claiming that he has associated partners with Allah

(*shirk*) by equating the Prophet's knowledge ﷺ to that of Allah Most High with his words 'Your knowledge includes knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen'.

As for the story behind the composition of the ode and how it came to be known as the *Burdah*, Hājji Khalīfah states the following in *Kashf al-zunūn*:

It is related that he began composing it when he was afflicted with paralysis [as a result of a stroke]; and so he sought intercession by virtue of it with Allah Most High. Then, when he fell asleep, he saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream, who wiped [him] with his blessed hand,¹ whereupon his health was restored. Thereafter, as he left home first thing in the morning, one of the *fuqarā'* came across him and said, 'My master, I want you to give me the ode in which you eulogised the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.' He asked, 'Which one do you seek?' He replied, 'The one which begins with "Is it from remembering neighbours"'; so he gave it to him and it gained popularity amongst the people. When it reached al-Ṣāhib Bahā' al-Dīn, King al-Zāhir's minister, he requested a copy of it and swore a vow that he would not hear it except barefooted, standing and with his head uncovered. Moreover, he and his family would seek blessings by means of it; and as a consequence of its blessings, they saw great things in both their religious and worldly affairs.

The reason behind it becoming widely known as the *Burdah* is that Sa'd al-Dīn al-Fāriqī suffered severe eye inflammation, where he was on the verge of becoming blind. He then saw in his dream someone saying to him, 'Go to al-Ṣāhib Bahā' al-Dīn and take from him the *Burdah* and place it over your eyes. You shall regain consciousness, if Allah Most High wills.' So he got up immediately and went

¹ Hājji Khalīfah here mentions another version in which he ﷺ threw a cloak over his shoulders and then wiped him.

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to him, and told him what he saw in his sleep. So al-Ṣāhib said, 'I have nothing with me that is called the *Burdah*. I have only a eulogy of the Prophet ﷺ that was composed by al-Būṣīrī, and we seek cure by means of it.' He then took it out and Sa'd al-Dīn placed it over his eyes, and he was cured from his inflammation.²

Although Imam al-Būṣīrī is most famously known for his poetry in eulogy of the Prophet ﷺ, in particular the *Burdah*, his biographers nevertheless mention that he memorised the Qur'an and some primary texts (*mutūn*) at an early age and then he later went to the al-Azhar Mosque, Egypt, and attended the lessons of the foremost scholars of the time, who issued him the teaching licence, after which he began to teach. In the earlier part of his life, he was drawn close to the governors, and he would praise them with his poetry and vilify their enemies; but later on, after accompanying Shaykh Abū 'Abbās al-Mursī, he began to devote himself to the spiritual path of Sufism under Shaykh al-Mursī's tutelage.³

This work, *The Guardian of the Cloak*—originally titled in Arabic *Naht ḥadīd al-bāṭil wa barduhu bi adillāh al-ḥaqq al-dhābbah 'an ṣāhib al-Burdah* [Carving the metal of falsehood and cooling it with factual proofs in defence of the author of the *Burdah*]⁴—is probably the only readily available work that thoroughly refutes the baseless allegations and erroneous objections against Imam al-Būṣīrī and his *Burdah*. Hence, it serves as a highly effective rebuttal of the original objector and his ilk in the present age.

The publishers of the Arabic original noted, in the section on the biography of the author, that a unique manuscript copy of

² Khalifah, Ḥājī. *Kashf al-zunūn*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2:1331-1332.

³ al-Kawhan al-Tāzī, Abū 'Alī. *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyyah al-kubrā*. 1st edn. Damascus: Dār al-Bayrūtī, 1421/2000, 99.

⁴ The edition used for this translation was published by Dār Jawāmi' al-Kalim in Cairo (without a date of publication, although the publisher's introduction is dated 1425/2004).

the book was discovered in the archives of Cambridge University; however, this copy contained considerable misspelling and distortion, which they endeavoured to correct by cross-referencing the sources cited. Despite their attempt—may Allah reward them for their efforts—to rectify these problems, there still remained a few minor mistakes which were noticed when cross-referenced with the original sources; they have therefore been amended by the translator. The translator, in this rendition, has broken up what was a continuous text by adding facilitative chapter breaks, headings and sub-headings.

Finally, I would like to thank all who assisted me in this project, with a special thanks to Andrew Booso for diligently copy-editing the work and providing beneficial advice, Muhammad Almass for design and Naiem Qaddoura for typesetting.

Author's Biography

HE IS 'ALLĀMAH Imam Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī al-Naqshabandī al-Khālidi al-Shāfi'ī. He—may Allah have mercy on him—was born in the year 1231 AH (1815 CE) in the city of Baghdad and he was raised there by his father. He memorised the noble Qur'an at an early age. Thereafter, he dedicated himself to scholarship and seeking knowledge until he began to deliver lessons at the young age of eighteen. Due to his acumen, he would write marginal notes to some of the texts that he studied at the age of fifteen.

After the demise of his father, he travelled to the ennobled Mecca and remained there for approximately ten years. He then returned to Baghdad and began to teach the sciences and instruct the people. Thereafter he travelled to Shām and stayed there for two years, after which he journeyed to the Hejaz and then to Egypt, followed by Mosul. He eventually returned to Baghdad, where he remained until he passed away.

He left behind the following works:

- ❖ *Ashadd al-jihād fi ibtāl al-ijtihād*;
- ❖ *Sulḥ al-ikhwān min ahl al-imān wa bayān al-dīn al-qayyim fi tabri'ah Ibn Taymiyyah wa Ibn al-Qayyim* (a defence of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim);
- ❖ *Al-Minhaj al-wahbiyyah fi al-radd 'alā al-Wahhābiyyah* (a refutation against the Wahhabi sect);
- ❖ *Manāqib al-madhāhib al-arba'ah* (on the merits of the four schools of Sunni law);

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- ❖ *Dawḥah al-tawḥīd fī 'ilm al-kalām* (on theology);
- ❖ *Rawḍah al-ṣafā fī ba'd al-manāqib wālīd al-Mustafā* (on the merits of the Prophet's father);
- ❖ *Risālah fī al-radd 'ala Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī* (a refutation of Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī);
- ❖ *Maslā al-wājīd*;
- ❖ *Tashṭīr al-Burdah*;⁵
- ❖ *Naḥt ḥadīd al-bāṭil wa barduhu bi adillah al-ḥaqq al-dhābbah 'an ṣāḥib al-Burdah* (which is the original work that has been translated in this publication—a defence of the *Burdah*).

He—may Allah have mercy upon him—passed away in Baghdad shortly before *maghrib* on the night of 'Īd al-Fiṭr in the year 1299 AH.

⁵ *Tashṭīr* is where a poet augments a poem of another poet by adding a verse of his own in between the two hemistichs of each of its verses, while maintaining the original metre and rhyme. For example in this ode, the author inserts between the two hemistichs of the verse 'If he takes not my hand in the Afterlife' and 'Out of his grace, then say, "Alas, I shall be doomed"' a verse of his own, which is, 'And rescue me from Allah and punishment and pain | Or intercede for me tomorrow for what I have reaped [of sins].' The process is termed *tashṭīr* and the author of such a composition is called a *mushattīr*.

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ALL PRAISE BELONGS to Allah who has furnished us with the cloaks (*burad*) from faith's robes of honour and has granted us to savour the coolness (*bard*) of faith's pure drink. He has favoured us with the heart's conviction to resolve to seek the intercession of His Beloved ﷺ in this world and the Next and has banished its denier who transgressed in them both,⁶ with the greatest loss by attaining a ruinous bargain.

The eye may deny the light of the sun due to inflammation
And the mouth may deny the taste of water due to illness

May blessings and greetings be upon their possessor, the intercessor whose intercession is accepted, the possessor of the praiseworthy station under which every station is subdued in relation to his most elevated position, and through which Ādam and all others invoked Allah (*tawassul*), whereupon He accepted his repentance. Furthermore, he is the only one that mankind, including the messengers, will rush to during the terrifying setting [of the Rising]; thus, all groups of people shall seek his help on that day and plead to him and for it [his intercession], and so he will be granted it after the Resolute Messengers (*'ul al-'azm*) will decline the task.⁷

⁶ In other words, in this world and the Afterlife.

⁷ The Resolute Messengers (*'ul al-'azm*), according to what al-Baghawī has transmitted from Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah ؓ, are the following prophets: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Isā and Muhammad, ﷺ. They are called as such based

By Allah, what a blessing he and it [his intercession] are! How universal is the generosity of this master in whom hopes are placed, and how comprehensive it is! May Allah bless him, his family and Companions who strike with an arrow that they took from him and with an anger which is for his sake, and who terrified the renegades and critics with the spears of their piercing radiant proofs.

To proceed: the one impoverished to his Lord and Master and hopeful of his Prophet's intercession in this world of his and the Next, Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Effendī al-Baghdādī—may Allah empower him with the utmost proof against every foe—says: In the year 1269 [AH], a noble letter from the ennobled Mecca reached me containing grave news: one of the residents of Najd, who studied with us, had with him *Burdah al-Madīh*—which is the tried and tested balsam for every wounded person—together with my *tashṭīr*,⁸ which is merged with it and increased its beauty and splendour, when one of the vermin of Najd condemned some of what he found therein concerning [the matter of] intercession. Then another one of them wrote an epistle wherein he disparages the status of the author of the treatise [*Burdah*].

The latter exhibited therein tenuous arguments, in which he claims courage whilst employing weak objections to some of its verses. Indeed, what will convey to you the reality of these objections? [I say:] Drivel, mendacity and proofs of compound ignorancel He claims that the author of the *Burdah*, due to his words:

يَا أَكْرَمَ الْخَلْقِ ...

O noblest of creation ...,⁹

on the verse from the Qur'an: *And remember when We took a covenant from the prophets, and from you [O Muhammad ﷺ] and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Isā the son of Maryam. We took from them a solemn covenant* (Qur'an 33:7).

⁸ See footnote 5 for the definition of *tashṭīr*.

⁹ The rest of the verse reads: 'I have no one to take refuge in | except you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls.' See chapter four for the author's rejoinder to this preposterous allegation.

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has committed disbelief (*kafara*), and thus apostatised, as does whoever reads or listens to it, or has it in his possession and approves of it; and that such a person has transgressed the limits and the prescribed death sentence is the necessary punishment for them.

The person who informed me of the letter, and who had disclosed its contents, began to rouse my determination to refute these fables. So I said: How strange that these scum have not become fully satiated with these fables, such that someone appeared amongst them in these days who persists in [trying to] straighten their perverted innovation (*bid'ah*) and protests. Accordingly, I sought help from Allah Most High to refute him and repel his charge of apostasy (*riddah*) back to him, his party and troops, and so as to delight the lovers of the Chosen One ﷺ through [the demonstration of] clear and compelling proofs. Due to the mendacity of these objections of his—by Allah's eternality—they are not in need of a rebuttal, nor are they of any value or consideration. However, out of caution [I turned to this composition] in order to prevent their nonsense entering into some minds and so as to repel this *Khārijī's*¹⁰ fabrication of the clearest of texts. I have entitled it *Naht ḥadīd al-bāṭil wa bardubu bi adillah al-ḥaqq al-dhābbah 'an ṣāhib al-burdah* [Carving the metal of falsehood and cooling it with factual proofs in defence of the author of the *Burdah*].

Before proceeding to the objective, let us present a biography of the composer of the *Burdah* and an exposition of his virtue that is a testimony to his manifest excellence.

¹⁰ *Khārijī* is the singular form of *Khawārij* (Kharijites or the Dissenters): an early heterodox sect in Islam that dissented from the Muslim community and revolted against the Rightly-Guided Caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ؑ. They were known for their extreme literalism and would declare that anyone who departed from their understanding had in fact left the fold of Islam; hence, the author refers to this objector and his ilk as *Khawārij*, as did the likes of Ibn 'Abidīn in his *Ḥāshiyah* on *Durr al-mukhtār* under the chapter: The Insurgents (*al-Bughāh*).

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR OF THE BURDAH

Ibn Hajar [al-Haytamī] ۞ said in his commentary on the *Hamziyyah* [also by al-Būṣīrī]:¹¹

The most lucid poem in eulogy of the Prophet ۞, the most outstanding and insuperable poetic meter that reveals his qualities, the most comprehensive ode that contains his merits, distinct signs of honour (*khaṣā'is*) and miracles, and the most eloquent composition that alludes to his unparalleled perfections is what was articulated in the form of red gold nuggets and arranged in the form of pearls and jewels by the shaykh, the Imam, the gnostic, the perfect chivalrous and erudite polymath, the meticulous eloquent writer, the leader of the poets and the most poetical of the scholars and the rhetorician of the eloquent, and the most eloquent of the sagacious rhetoricians, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd ibn Ḥammād ibn Muḥsin ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Ṣanhāj ibn Hilāl al-Ṣanhājī al-Dallāsīrī, later popularly known as al-Būṣīrī. [With regards to the name al-Būṣīrī,] it has been said that it was maybe the city of his father and therefore he became widely known by it.

He was born in the year 608 [AH]. Imams Abū Ḥayyān al-Naḥawī, al-Ya'murī Abū al-Faṭḥ ibn Sayyid al-Nās, the erudite scholar of his age al-'Izz ibn Jamā'ah and others studied under him. According to al-Maqrīzī, he passed away in either 696 or 697 [AH]; however, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī said that the correct date of his passing away is the year 694 [AH].

He was one of the marvels of his age in composing poetry and prose. If there was nothing [from him] other than his ode widely known as the *Burdah*, whose acclaim increased to such an extent that people began to study it with one

¹¹ The following words are in reality those of Shaykh Badr al-Zarkashī that Ibn Hajar cites in his commentary on the *Hamziyyah*.

another in homes and mosques, it would suffice him as an honour and [as an establishment of his] pre-eminence.

As for the prominent scholars and lamps in times of darkness who have narrated this ode and [his other composition] the *Hamziyyah*, they are countless. Amongst them are those mentioned by Ibn Marzūq, who commentated on the *Burdah* in two large volumes and said:

I have received the ode's narration [from various sources], including [the following chain]: I heard it from the recitation of the Shaykh,¹² the prolific *muhaddith* [hadith specialist], the Ḥāfiẓ, Shihāb al-Dīn Abī al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Rashīdī al-Makkī in the year 792 [AH] before the Imam, the famous prolific 'Allāmah, the globe-trotter, the *muhaddith*, the narrator, the master of rare sciences and amazing compilations, Majd al-Dīn al-Fayrūrazabādī al-'Irāqī, the author of the *Qāmūs*, who settled in the ennobled Mecca. In addition, Badr al-Dīn Abī 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn Jamā'ah al-Kinnānī al-Miṣrī al-Shāfi'ī, the son of the Imam, the 'Allāmah, Qāḍī al-Quḍāh 'Izz al-Dīn Abī 'Amr 'Abd al-'Azīz, narrated it to me from the author.

It was narrated to me by more than one of my renowned shaykhs by way of licence (*ijāzah*) from the abovementioned Ibn Jamā'ah, amongst them the three Egyptians who are proofs of Islam and the flag bearers of the Prophet's Sunnah ﷺ: Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Raslān ibn Naṣr ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī; 'Umar ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī—better known as Ibn al-Mulaqqin—and the one unparalleled and peerless in his era Zayn al-Dīn ibn al-'Irāqī.

The erudite scholar and grammarian, one of the grammarians of the Egyptian lands, Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad al-Ghumārī narrated it to me by

¹² Another manuscript has 'Allāmah' instead of 'Shaykh'.

way of *ijāzah* from Abū Ḥayyān, who narrated from the author.

The shaykh, the jurist, the Imām, the grammarian, the most-learned linguist, the adept *ḥāfiẓ*, the pious gnostic Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Azdī—better known as al-Qaṣṣār, who has a commentary on the ode in which he mentions a brief summary of linguistic and grammatical features—narrated it to me by way of *ijāzah* from the Shaykh and famous globe-trotting *muḥaddith* Muḥammad ibn Jābir al-Qīsī al-Wādāshī, who heard it from its author. Truly, all praise belongs to Allah.

Ibn Hajar [al-Hayramī]  said:

I have received the narration of this ode and other poems of its author through several chains of transmission, amongst them—which is the shortest chain to the author—I narrate it from our shaykh, Shaykh al-Islam and the seal of the *ḥuffāẓ*, Abū Yahyā Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī al-Shāfi‘ī, who narrates it from al-‘Izz [Abī Muḥammad] ibn al-Furāt, who narrates it from al-‘Izz ibn Badr ibn Jamā‘ah, who narrates it from its author.

It has also [been narrated] from the Ḥafīẓ of his Age Ibn Hajar [al-‘Asqalānī]—the Commentator of *al-Bukhārī*—who narrates it from the Imam, the *mujtahid* al-Sirāj al-Bulqīnī, al-Sirāj ibn al-Mulaqqin and Ḥafīẓ Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī, who narrates it from al-‘Izz ibn Jamā‘ah, who narrates it from its author.

Furthermore, I narrate it from our shaykhs who narrate it from Ḥafīẓ al-Suyūṭī, who narrates it from a number of shaykhs, among whom is al-Shumunnī al-Ḥanafī: some of them having read it, while others [narrate it] by way of *ijāzah*, who narrate it from ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥanbalī, who likewise narrates it from al-‘Izz ibn Jamā‘ah, who narrates it from its author.

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These two chains of transmission (*isnāds*) include some of the foremost scholars who are relied upon in religious affairs. As for other [chains], they are countless because innumerable thousands of great scholars and others have narrated it from the time of the author.

POINT OF BENEFIT

A number of prominent scholars have commentated on the *Burdah*, amongst them:

1. Shaykh Ibn Marzūq al-Tilmisānī al-Mālikī, the erudite Imam and *muḥaddith*, in both a large and a small commentary—in his larger commentary he mentioned various sciences;
2. Imam ‘Allāmah Abū al-Biqā’ al-Ḥanafī, who wrote a commentary on it that he entitled *al-‘Uddah fī kullī shiddah*;
3. the meticulous erudite scholar (*al-‘allāmah al-mudaqqiq*) Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, the commentator of the Qur’ān and the commentator of *Jam‘ al-jawāmi‘* and *al-Minhāj* in fiqh;
4. Shaykh al-Islam, the Ḥāfiz, the Ḥujjah Shaykh Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī;
5. Imam al-Muḥaddith Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qusṭullānī,¹³ the commentator on *al-Bukhārī*, who used it in his book *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyah*; and he adorned this latter book of his with it;
6. ‘Allāmah al-Ḥalabī, who used it, together with the *Hamziyyah*, in his *Sīrah*;
7. the second ‘Allāmah, al-Sa‘d al-Taftazānī (may his radiant secret be sanctified), the author of works that are widespread through the horizons;

¹³ ‘Al-Qusṭullānī’ has been written as such throughout the work based on Shaykh ‘Abd-Allāh al-Lahjī’s vowelising of it in his *Muntahā al-sūl*, a commentary on Shaykh Yūsuf al-Nabahānī’s work on the Prophetic characteristics (*shamā’il*) entitled *Wasā’il al-uṣūl*. However, his name is often written as ‘al-Qasṭallānī’, as for example on the cover of the Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī’s edition of his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, entitled *Iṣṭihād al-sārī*.

8. the 'Allāmah, the grammarian, Shaykh Khālīd al-Azhārī, the author of *al-Azharīyah*, *Sharh 'alā al-Qawā'id* and *al-Taṣrīḥ* [all books on Arabic grammar];
9. the exacting 'Allāmah, Shaykh Zādah al-Rūmī al-Hanafī, the author of *Ḥāshiyah al-Bayḍāwī*, in several volumes;
10. al-Sayyid al-Ghubrīnī al-Muqri'ī-al-Shihāb al-Khafājī mentioned it in his *Rayḥānah*;
11. the 'Allāmah of al-Rūm al-Khādimī;
12. 'Allāmah 'Abd al-Salām al-Marākishī al-Mālikī—he mentioned the special effects (*khawāṣṣ*) of its verses;
13. and 'Allāmah al-Qabbānī al-Baṣrī.

Moreover, I have seen three commentaries [on it] in Persian. In the commentary of 'Allāmah Ibn Marzūq there are indications that it has many commentaries from which he cites without mentioning their names.

As for those [scholars] who have augmented it into quintuple form, they are far too many. Moreover, it is well known that 'Allāmah al-Bayḍāwī, the author of the famous exegesis of the Qur'an, augmented it into septuple form.

Is it therefore conceivable for all of these scholars to be unaware of the fact that it contains polytheism (*shirk*), disbelief (*kufr*) or errors? Yet you, the ignoramus, are aware of that and have highlighted it, when they have been oblivious to it and did not? Or were they aware of that but, in spite of which, they nevertheless deceived people? By the Lord of Mankind, this is nothing but Satan who whispers in the hearts of this riff-raff! You shall now receive definitive proofs to thwart these disgusting pieces of filth in their tracks, hence removing the garb of ambiguity from your heart.

It is not hidden that the age of the *Burdah*'s author precedes the age of Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah and those of his followers after him; and this ode had such great acclaim throughout those numerous centuries, yet absolutely no condemnation has been transmitted from anyone of these [abovementioned scholars] or others. Had there been anything in it that contravenes the Sacred

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Law in the slightest, then it would have been necessary for it to be have been highlighted; so what [would have been the case] if there was polytheism in it that expels one from the religion, as claimed by the despicable *Khawārij*? However, this age is as mentioned by the poet who said:

It became so scrawny that, due to its scrawniness,
Its kidneys appeared, such that every bankrupt person offered
to sell it

It has been narrated in the rigorously-authenticated hadith that one of the signs of the Final Hour is that 'the last of this nation will curse its predecessors', which is contrary to what Allah has enjoined and mentioned regarding the [trait of the] believers: *Those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour against those who have believed'* [Qur'an 59:10]. Rather, [their practice] is in emulation of the *Rāfidah*¹⁴ and the *Khawārij* who declared the noble Companions to be disbelievers, and branded them as apostates and polytheists by means of speciousness (*shubhah*) which is weaker than the spider's web. Thus, the best of this Muhammadan nation has a beautiful exemplar in the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, for [it is mentioned] in *al-Bukhārī* under the chapter heading Killing the *Khawārij* and the Heretics (*mulhidin*): Ibn 'Umar ؓ used to consider them to be the worst of creation; he said [regarding them], 'They are people who took recourse to verses [from the Qur'an] that were revealed concerning the disbelievers and assigned them to the believers.'

¹⁴ The *Rāfidah* is an epithet for the twelver Shiites. The name is from the word *rāfā*, which in Arabic means to reject or refuse. They were called such because they rejected the authority of Zayd, the son of 'Alī, when they wanted him to dissociate himself from the Two Shaykhs (Abū Bakr and 'Umar) and he refused ■ do so.

SHAYKH IBN TAYMIYYAH AND TAKFĪR

When asked about two men discussing who first introduced the charging of Muslims with disbelief (*takfir*), Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah, in *al-Fatāwā*, replied:

The origin of declaring Muslims to be disbelievers arose from none other than the *Khawārij* and the *Rāfidah* who would declare the imams [leaders] of the Muslims to be disbelievers because they believed that they erred in religious matters. The *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* unanimously agreed that it is impermissible to declare Muslim scholars to be disbelievers because of a mere mistake; rather, everyone's opinion is subject to acceptance and rejection with the exception of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Furthermore, not everyone whose opinion is rejected due to a mistake committed by him is to be declared a disbeliever or a *fāsiq* [sinner]. Moreover, Allah has mentioned the believers' supplication: *Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error* [Qur'an 2:287]; and it is narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* [of Imam al-Bukhārī] that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'I have done so.'

He went on to say:

It is well known from those that spoke in this regard that curtailing the declaration of Muslims to be disbelievers—nay, deterring the declaration of Muslim scholars to be disbelievers, even if they err—is one of the most worthy legal objectives. Thus, it is considered a good legal objective to hold the position that one is to repel the declaration of someone as a disbeliever when one believes he is not a disbeliever, and that is in order to safeguard his Muslim brother. In addition, if one endeavours to reach a scholarly judgement and is correct therein, then one has two rewards; and if one endeavours [in reaching a judgement] yet errs therein, then one has a single reward. In any case, the proponent of this [incorrect] opinion is commended for

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his action and is thus rewarded if he has a good intention, and whoever condemns him is more worthy of discretionary punishment (*ta'zir*).

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī, in the commentary on the *Arba'ūn* of Imam al-Nawawī, has mentioned:

Ibn Mahdī narrates that Mālik said, 'None of the whims (*ahwā'*) existed during the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān ؓ.' Mālik ؓ used to allude with the usage of the word 'whims' to the dissention that arose in the fundamentals of religion, as in the case of the *Khawārij*, *Rāfiḍah*, *Murji'ah* and the like,¹⁵ who declared Muslims to be disbelievers and considered their blood and property to be lawful, or deemed them to be eternally in the Hellfire, or declared the elite of this nation to be corrupt; and their opposite [i.e. from the *Murji'ah* sect] who claimed that acts of disobedience are of no harm to one and that no one from the people of monotheism (*tawḥīd*) will enter the Fire.

He [Ibn Rajab] also said in his commentary on the second hadith [of the *Arba'ūn*]:

These issues, i.e. issues relating to Islam, faith and hypocrisy (*nifāq*), are extremely serious matters. The disagreement

¹⁵ The *Murji'ah* were a heterodox sect that arose as a reaction to the *Mu'tazilah* and the *Khawārij*. Consequently, they adopted the exact opposite extreme in believing that sins, no matter how great, are of no harmful consequence in the Afterlife as long as a person has faith (*īmān*), just as acts of obedience are of no benefit as long as one is a disbeliever. Faith, according to this sect, is solely knowing Allah and believing in Him, and having love for Him in one's heart; while anything besides knowledge, such as acts of obedience, have nothing to do with faith and leaving them is of no harm to one's faith, and one will not be punished for such omissions on the Day of Resurrection as long as one has faith.

over what they mean is the first dispute that arose in this nation; hence, the opposition of the *Khawārij* to the Companions, whence they excluded the disobedient amongst the monotheists from the fold of Islam altogether and categorised them within the sphere of disbelief (*kuf*r) and treated them as disbelievers, thereby considering their blood and property to be lawful.

If this, therefore, is the state of the *Khawārij* in their declaring Muslims to be disbelievers for committing acts of disobedience, then what about the state of those who declare Muslim scholars to be disbelievers due to recommended sunnas or permissible matters? It is as if they have surpassed the *Khawārij* by degrees! In reality, they have instead descended by degrees. We ask Allah for protection.

CHAPTER ONE

Objections to the Burdah

LET US MENTION the point of contention of this person who has shunned the truth and who, with his divisive opposition, has departed from the congregation and dissented. So we say—and success is from Allah alone—he [al-Būṣīrī] said in the original [*Burdah*] and its *tashīr* [by the author]:

إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي مَعَادِي أَخِذًا بِيَدِي

If he [the Prophet] takes not my hand in the Afterlife

وَمُنْقِذِي مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَالْأَلَمِ

And rescue me from Allah's punishment and pain

أَوْ شَافِعًا لِي بِمَا قَدْ جَنَيْتُ غَدًا

Or intercede for me tomorrow for what I have reaped [of sins]

فَضْلًا وَإِلَّا فَقُلْ: يَا زَلَّةَ الْقَدَمِ

Out of [his] grace, then say, 'Alas, I am doomed'

OBJECTION ONE

[These verses mean that] the Messenger's goal ﷺ is to actively rescue from Allah's punishment (*bi al-fi'l*); and if it does not actively occur, then by way of intercession. So weigh His words, Glorified

is He, to His Prophet ﷺ: *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?* [Qur'an 39:19], which is an interrogation of denial (*istifhām inkār*).¹⁶ Furthermore, He said about the *Sāhib Yāsīn*.¹⁷ *If the Beneficent should wish me any harm, their intercession will be of no avail to me, nor can they rescue me* [Qur'an 36:23]. This explicitly establishes that whomever Allah wants to harm, then there is none to save him or intercede for him.

Moreover, He Most High said: *A day on which no soul shall have power at all for another soul* [Qur'an 82:19]; and He said to His Prophet ﷺ: *You do not have a say in the matter* [Qur'an 3:128]. The Prophet ﷺ said to his relatives, 'Save yourselves from the Fire! I cannot avail you against Allah.' He ﷺ even said to Fātimah, his piece of flesh and the leader of the women of the worlds, 'Save yourself from the Fire! I cannot avail you at all against Allah.'¹⁸ Therefore, can faith in the abovementioned verses and hadiths coexist in the heart of a slave [of Allah] with faith in the words of the one who says:

إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي مَعَادِي أَخِذًا بِيَدِي

If he takes not my hand in the Afterlife

¹⁶ Meaning a rhetorical question, i.e. you will not be able to rescue he who is in the Fire.

¹⁷ He is Ḥabīb al-Najjār (the Carpenter) from Antioch, who is referred to in *Sūrah Yāsīn* (Qur'an 36:20-27) beginning with His Most High's words: *Then there came running, from the farthest part of the city, a man, saying, 'O my people! Obey the messengers who fled.'* Al-Baghawī, in his *Tafsīr*, mentions: *Then there came running, from the farthest part of the city, a man—he is Ḥabīb al-Najjār [the Carpenter], though al-Suddī has said that he was a bleacher; and Wahb said that he used to produce silk. He was ill and suffered from leprosy early. Moreover, he lived at the furthest gate of the city. He was a charitable believer, who would gather his daily earnings in the evening and divide them into two halves: a half with which he would feed his dependents, and the other half that he would give away as charity. When he heard that his people were intending to kill the messengers [sent by 'Isā] who had come to them, he said, "O my people! Obey the messengers who fled."* See *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*.

¹⁸ Narrated by Muslim (204), al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-mufrad* (48), Aḥmad (8402), Tirmidhī (3185), al-Nasā'ī in *al-Kubrā* (6438) and others.

OBJECTION TWO

فَإِنَّ مِنْ جُودِكَ الدُّنْيَا وَصَرَّتْهَا

Verily, this world and its counterpart [i.e. the Afterlife] are from your generosity (*jūd*)?

Jūd is to give and show benevolence. Yet Allah Most High says: *Verily unto Us [belong] the Afterlife and the former [life of this world]* [Qur'an 92:13].

OBJECTION THREE

Likewise [the poet says]:

وَمِنْ عُلُومِكَ عِلْمَ اللَّزْجِ وَالْقَلَمِ

Your knowledge includes knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen.

Included amongst the things inscribed by the Pen on the Tablet are the keys of the Unseen realm which no one, except Allah, knows and other such matters of the Unseen which are exclusively known by Him, Glorified is He. He Most High said: *Say [O Muhammad]: 'None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah'* [Qur'an 27:65]. Thus, according to his [al-Būṣīrī's] words 'Your knowledge includes knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen', it is permissible for one to say, 'No one in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah and Muhammad!'

CHAPTER TWO

The Prophet's Intercession

Rejoinder to Objection One

WE SAY—AND THROUGH Allah is success—that this objection is void (*bāṭil*) from a number of perspectives [set-out below].

RESPONSE ONE

This man claims that the following words of the poet and the *mushattir* [the author] mean that this rescuing actively occurs without intercession:

إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي مَعَادِي أَخِذًا بِيَدِي

If he takes not my hand in the Afterlife

وَمُنْقِذِي مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَالْأَلَمِ

And rescue me from Allah's punishment and pain

He further contends that if it does not actively occur, then [it will occur] through intercession, due to the words of the *mushattir*.

أَوْ شَافِعًا لِي مِمَّا قَدْ جَنَيْتُ غَدًا

Or intercede for me tomorrow because of
what I have reaped

The matter, however, is not as he claimed, because rescuing and taking by the hand is also through intercession, as anything besides intercession is [considered] acting independently from Allah, and such a belief is inconceivable for a believer, even if he was an ignorant Bedouin. What is therefore meant here [in the above verses] are the various types of intercession. The first type is taking one by the hand and rescuing one, as has been mentioned in the rigorously-authentic hadiths over [whose authenticity] al-Bukhārī and Muslim have concurred. For in the hadith of the intercession [it says]:

I will say, 'O my Lord, my nation, my nation!' whereupon it will be said, 'Proceed and remove [from the Fire] whoever has in his heart an atom's weight of good.' So I will proceed and do that. I will then say, 'O my Lord, my nation, my nation!' and it will subsequently be said, 'Proceed and remove [from the Fire] whoever has the least weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart.' I will therefore proceed and remove them from the Fire.

Similarly, it has been narrated in the hadith of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* that the believers will beseech Allah on behalf of their brothers, and so it will be said, 'Remove [from the Fire] whomever you know.' They will thus remove a considerable number of creation. Then it will be said, 'Return, and in whosoever's heart you find an atom's weight of good [remove them from the Fire].'

Accordingly, the abovementioned has been established in these rigorously-authentic hadiths, so what is the prohibition in using the above wording? Is this removal [of creation from the Fire] none other than to rescue from the punishment?

RESPONSE TWO

In the Afterlife, which is the Day of Resurrection, the Prophet ❁ is alive as he, and all of creation, were in this world, so there is nothing to impede him on that Day from being a cause and removing and rescuing from the adversity, as he will be alive and present.

According to this man and his cohort of followers, a person who is alive and present has ability in and of himself [to benefit others]. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, in *Kashf al-shubahāt*, responded to the authentic hadith that people on the Day of Resurrection will seek help, in turn, from Ādam, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Isā, until they finally arrive to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who will say, 'I am for it, I am for it':

We do not deny seeking help from creation (*isti'ānah*) in regard to that which he is able to do, just as He Most High said concerning the story of Mūsā, upon him be peace: *One of his people asked him for help against his enemy* [Qur'an 28:15]. [This is] just as a person asks for help from his companions in war or in other matters over which creation have ability.

Since, according to these people, whoever is alive and present is ascribed with action, because he has ability to do so, the author of the *Burdah* is simply telling us: If the Prophet does not take my hand in the Afterlife—which is the Day of Resurrection—out of [his] grace, then say, 'Alas, I am doomed,' for then the Prophet ﷺ and all of creation will be alive and present on that day, and will have the ability over ordinary tangible matters; and the ascription of actions to their executor and [their] means is legally and conventionally valid (*jā'iz*).

This man also mentioned in his rough draft, wherein he declared that Muslims who supplicate to Allah through the mediation of the prophets and the righteous (*tawassul*) are disbelievers:¹⁹

¹⁹ 'What is meant by *tawassul* here is that a slave adopts a means (*wasilah*), i.e. an intermediary to Allah Most High in his supplication or hope, because of that intermediary possessing some virtue, right, status, rank or the fulfilment of one's supplication with Allah Most High. All of that is legally permissible as demonstrated by the Book of Allah Most High and the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, narrations from the Companions and the consensus of the nation.' Sirāj al-Dīn, 'Abd-Allāh. *al-Ad'īyah wa al-adhkar*. 5th edn. Aleppo: Dār al-Falāh, 1424/2004, 251.

Asking for help is permissible in ordinary, apparent means (*asbāb*) of tangible matters, such as fighting, capturing an enemy or a predatory animal and the like; for example, in the statements, 'O for Zayd!' (*yā la-Zayd*), i.e. 'Help, Zayd.' Also, 'Help, my tribesmen' (*yā la-qawmī*) and 'Help, Muslims' (*yā la l-muslimīn*), as mentioned by them in books on [Arabic] grammar, in accordance with actual apparent means.

Now how can he deny the Prophet's actively rescuing ❁ his nation from punishment and deem it impossible and contrary to intercession, notwithstanding the fact that the Prophet ❁ will be alive and present on that day, having the ability to do what he will be able to do on that day, and will be able to act as he did in the life of this world? This being like how he [in this life] would throw at the enemy, when they were in their thousands, a handful of soil and turn them blind, and quench the thirst of thousands and satiate them with a small amount of water and food by being a means. The noble Companions ❁ said, 'During battles, we would take the Messenger of Allah ❁ as a shield,' namely they would use him ❁ as a shield (i.e. to guard themselves against the enemy). In the rigorously-authentic hadith [it is mentioned], 'You are hovering over the Fire as the moths hover, and I am taking you by your belts so that you do not fall therein.'

Even greater than this is what Allah ascribed to the *tāghūt*,²⁰ which are the idols, in their removing the disbelievers from the light [and placing them in] the darkness, in spite of the fact that they do not have any sort of ability whatsoever. Yet because they are a means for removal, [the act of] removal was ascribed to them. Similarly is the case here; since the Prophet ❁ was a means of rescuing from the punishment, [the act of] rescuing is ascribed to him.

Moreover, regarding the hadith narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* [of Imams al-Bukhārī and Muslim] and others about seeking rain

²⁰ In the verse: Allah is the Protecting Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are false deities (*tāghūt*). They bring them out of light into darkness (Qur'an 2:257).

through his supplication ﷻ, 'O Allah, grant us a rainfall that is a saviour (*ghaythan mughithan*),' the commentators of hadith and the jurists from all schools of thought—as mentioned in *Sharh al-Iqnā'*, *al-Munthā*, *al-Zād* and others—²¹ have said that '*mughith*' means 'one that saves from adversity'. So even though rain is an inanimate object that has no ability, it was ascribed with [the act of] aiding and rescuing because it was a means for rescuing and aiding.

There is a saying of the Arabs that is well known amongst the scholars: 'The spring season grew herbs; and the rotation of the sun has stopped perpetuity,' even though, in reality, the one who causes growth and stops from perpetuity is only Allah. Such an expression is called *al-majāz al-'aqlī* [rationally figurative expression], and examples of the like are profusely found in the Book [Qur'an] and the Sunnah. He Most High said: *So Mūsā punched him, and [accidentally] killed him* [Qur'an 28:15], although death is only from Allah. Furthermore, Allah said about him ﷺ: *He [the Prophet] releases them from their heavy burdens and from the fetters that are upon them* [Qur'an 7:157], although the one who releases [in reality] is Allah Most High; but because the Prophet ﷺ was a means of such, the action was ascribed to him.

In fact, all actions are ascribed to the one who executes them. Thus, it is said, 'So-and-so gave, and So-and-so benefitted me, and So-and-so hit me and, rescued me and, helped me.' These usages are valid by consensus (*ijmā'*) for those who are alive and present and who undertake them. However, according to the opinion of this man, it is necessary that these actions and others are not ascribed to anyone who executes them. Yet there is no one who has held this view, as it will therefore close the door to attributing actions to their executor; and no sane person holds such a view! Rather, the ascription of rescuing from the Fire has been mentioned about certain deeds because of them being a means, even though, in reality, the one who rescues is Allah Most High. It is narrated in a rigorously-authentic hadith that the

²¹ These are titles of some of the foremost authoritative legal texts in the Hanbalī school of law.

Prophet ❁ said, 'I saw a man who was being punished in his grave, when [suddenly] his prayer came and rescued him from the punishment; and another was rescued by [his] pilgrimage and another by [his] fasting.' So if the ascription of [the act of] rescuing to deeds is valid because they are a means, then the ascription to entities is a fortiori, especially the noblest entity amongst creation [i.e. the Prophet ❁].

As for his words 'Or intercede for me tomorrow because of what I have reaped', he intends here to inform [us] about another type of intercession, which is him being an intercessor for me by seeking forgiveness or supplicating, and not literally by his action. In this case, he intercedes for me with a second intercession for the sins that I have reaped, so that Allah Most High does not take me to task for them and that I do not witness punishment at all, or that my station is raised.

THE VARIOUS TYPES OF INTERCESSION

Al-Nawawī has mentioned in commentary on *Muslim*, citing from the commentary of Qādī Iyād [on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*], that intercession is of five types:

1. that which is exclusive to our Prophet ❁, which is his intercession to relieve mankind from the prolonged standing [on the Day of Reckoning] and to hasten the reckoning;
2. [his intercession] for a group of people to enter Paradise without reckoning—which has been narrated about our Prophet ❁;
3. the intercession for [some of] those who were worthy of the Hellfire so that they do not enter it—our Prophet ❁, and whomever Allah wills in addition, will intercede [in this case];
4. the intercession for the sinners who have entered the Fire. The hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* have mentioned their removal from the Fire through the intercession of our Prophet ❁, the angels and their brothers from amongst the believers;

5. and the intercession for raising the ranks in Paradise for its occupants.

RESPONSE THREE

It is possible that what is meant by his words 'If he takes not my hand in the Afterlife | And rescue me from ... pain' is rescuing from the terror of the standing, as it will be the severest punishment; so much so that people will seek help from the prophets, until they finally arrive to our Prophet ﷺ and he will then relieve them from this severity, which people will wish to escape from, even if they were ordered to be thrown in the Fire, because of the terrors that they will be witnessing, as has been narrated in the hadiths. Undoubtedly, this is rescuing from Allah's punishment and pain, and it is not specific to Allah's punishing [people] with the Fire. Thereafter, he ﷺ will intercede with another [type of] intercession exclusively for his nation [i.e. the Muslims]: either for the forgiveness of their sins, or the raising of their ranks in Paradise, or admitting them therein without any accountability.

RESPONSE FOUR

When a believer says something, his faith is an indicator (*qarinah*) that he did not intend to convey a meaning that may be harmful to his belief, and nor does he believe such a [harmful] thing, especially in light of the context of his words. And this scholar-poet says in his ode after a number of verses:

وَلَنْ يَضِيقَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ جَاهُكَ بِي

Your status, O Messenger of Allah, will not
decrease on my account

إِذَا الْكَرِيمُ تَجَلَّى بِاسْمِ مُتَّقِمٍ

When the Generous shall manifest Himself
with the name Avenger

From this it is known that the author of the *Burdah*, in his words 'If he takes not my hand in the Afterlife' intends [helping] by way of intercession, not independence from Allah, as no believer holds such a belief, even if he expresses it without qualification and does not qualify it with intercession, as that is what is meant by it.

RESPONSE FIVE

This man denies the ascription to the Messenger of Allah ❁ of actively rescuing from the Fire because he is not Allah; he says, 'Verily, Allah has negated rescuing from it [the Fire] with His words: *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?* [Qur'an 39:19].' Yet he mentions the rigorously-authentic hadiths in which [the tribe of] Quraysh is ascribed as rescuing from the Fire, not realising that they actually refute his claim, since it could be said: How is it that Allah negated [the act of] rescuing to his Prophet ❁ yet affirmed it for his relatives from Quraysh, with the Prophet's words ❁ 'Save yourselves from the Fire! O Fāṭimah, save yourself from the Fire?' For he ❁ attributed the act of rescuing from the Fire to them.

If you were to say: The Prophet ❁ meant that you become the means (*tasabbab*) of saving yourself by accepting Islam, then we reply: The unqualified usage of our words is similar to the unqualified usage of his words. What we mean by our words 'And rescue me from the punishment of Allah's punishment and pain' is [for him] to be a means of rescuing me or actively rescue me *by the command of Allah Most High*, as in the hadiths above. Then, as for my words 'Or intercede for me tomorrow for what I have reaped [of sins]', this is another [type of] intercession in addition to the intercession of rescuing; namely, [it is one of] seeking forgiveness for sins. He Most High said: *Ask forgiveness for your dhanb,*²² and for

²² Al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah and Abū Hurayrah ❁ said, 'The Messenger of Allah ❁ prayed until his feet swelled up; so he was asked, "Why do you bear this difficulty when Allah has forgiven you your previous and forthcoming dhanb?" He replied, "Should I not be a grateful servant?"' Al-Bājūrī said, 'This has been problematic in the past and the present, since he ❁ is infallible and

those who believe [Qur'an 47:19]; and He Most High said: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64]. Therefore, the first is an active intercession (*shafā'ah fi'liyyah*); such that he removes one from the punishment after one has fallen therein, whereas the second is a verbal intercession (*shafā'ah qawliyyah*), such that he intervenes between the sinner and him being taken to task. In fact, this is clear.

RESPONSE SIX

Another characteristic of the invalidity of this man's objection to the Prophet ﷺ being attributed with the act of 'rescuing' is his [incorrect] use of verses of the Qur'an to substantiate his claims, such as His Most High's words: *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?* [Qur'an 39:19]. [He seeks to argue through such a recourse that] this is an interrogation of denial, meaning 'you shall not save those in the Fire'.

Look, O nation of the religion [of Islam], at this person who claims *ijtihād*²³ and that his school (*madhhab*) is to derive [directly]

therefore commits no sins!' The best response is that it is classed as "noble deeds of the righteous are the bad deeds of those who have been drawn near [to Allah]"; as a human being is not free from shortcomings from the perspective of servitude in comparison to the grandeur of Lordship. [This is so] even though he ﷺ, in his acts of worship and obedience, attained the most exalted of ranks and the highest of degrees. He ﷺ said, 'Glory be to You! We have not worshipped You as You truly deserve. I am unable to enumerate praise for You as You have extolled yourself.' Consequently, it has been remarked, 'Forgiveness is of two types: forgiveness of the common folk, which is for them to be pardoned for their sins; and forgiveness of the elite, which is for them to be pardoned for their shortcomings.' al-Nabahānī, Yūsuf. *Wasā'il al-wuṣūl*. 2nd edn. Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 1425/2004, 256.

²³ *Ijtihād* is a level of scholarship, the highest of which is where one can derive rulings directly from the Islamic sources, i.e. the Qur'an, Sunnah, scholarly consensus and legal analogy; scholars of such calibre include the likes of the four Imams: Abū Ḥanifāh, Muḥammad Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, Mālik ibn Anas and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

from the Book [Qur'an] and the Sunnah, yet he does not know the meaning of the Book, nor the Sunnah!

We say to him: Did the Prophet ❁ understand the unqualified usage [of the word 'rescue'] as you understood it? [In other words,] that he will have absolutely no ability whatsoever to 'rescue' for it to be attributed to him? If he says that the Prophet ❁ understood the unqualified usage, then we reply to him: So how can he inform [us] in the hadiths about the intercession that he shall proceed and remove from the Fire whoever has the weight of a mustard seed of goodness in his heart? Furthermore, how is it possible for him to say to his Lord, 'My nation, my nation,' when it is revealed to him: *You cannot rescue those who are in the Fire?* In addition, how is it possible for him ❁ to say to his relatives, 'Save yourselves from the Fire?' Moreover, if he is unable to rescue, then how are others able to rescue when they are disbelievers, who have no proximity to Allah like his proximity, or a means like his means?

If the Prophet ❁ did not understand this [verse] to be unqualified, but rather understood it to be exclusive to a particular group of people whom Allah has judged in His pre-eternal knowledge to remain in disbelief, as Allah Most High said: *It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe* [Qur'an 2:6]; and: *Those against whom the word of your Lord has been proved true will not believe. Even if every sign was brought unto them, until they see [for themselves] the painful punishment* [Qur'an 10:96-97]; regarding His Most High's words *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?*, al-Baghawī ❁ said, 'It is reported from Ibn 'Abbās ❁ that it [this verse] was revealed regarding Abū Lahab and his son'—then the meaning of *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?* is: will you guide them to Islam when they have been predestined to eternal damnation and disbelief? Indeed, the beginning of the verse indicates that [latter meaning].

Allah Most High said: *He for whom the decree of punishment is justly due* [Qur'an 39:19]. It has been said that *the decree of punishment is*

[His Most High's words] *I shall most definitely fill Hell with jinn and mankind all together* [Qur'an 11:119]; and it has been said [that it refers to] His words, 'These are in the Fire, and I do not care; and these are in Paradise, and I do not care.'²⁴ If this verse [39:19] was revealed regarding a particular group of disbelievers, then how is it possible to thereby justify that the Prophet ﷺ will not be able to rescue his nation of believers from the Fire, when he ﷺ has affirmed for himself, and for the believers, the removal of the sinners in his nation from the Fire?

From this juncture, it becomes clear that whomever the Prophet ﷺ [directly] guides to Islam or is [indirectly] guided by him till the Day of Resurrection has been rescued by him ﷺ from the Fire and he is not of those for whom the decree of punishment is justly due. The proof for that are his words ﷺ to his relatives 'Save yourselves from the Fire', i.e. accept Islam and believe. The exegetes of the Qur'an unanimously concur that the verse *Will you [O Muhammad] rescue those who are in the Fire?* [Qur'an 39:19] was revealed regarding the Prophet's guiding ﷺ some of those whom Allah ordained will not believe; for when the verse was revealed in the Prophet ﷺ, he was alive and present, capable of performing the action, as is the opinion of this man and his cohorts [that a living person can so benefit others]. Allah did not mean by this verse that the Prophet ﷺ would rescue some of those in the Fire in the Afterlife; rather, what He means is [rescuing them] in this life by way of guiding them.

In the [book] *al-Sirah*, Ibn Ishāq narrates, with his chain of transmission to Ḥassān ibn Thābit ؓ, that the Prophet's poet ؓ commiserates in his ode after his death:

²⁴ This is a part of the hadith narrated by Ahmad on the authority of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Qatādah al-Sulamī, who said, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, "Allah Almighty and Majestic created Ādam and then extracted mankind from his back [loins] and said, "These are in Paradise, and I do not care; and these are in the Fire, and I do not care."'"

The Prophet's Intercession ﷺ

He shows [the path] to the All-Merciful to those who follow him

And rescues from the terror of humiliation, and guides
If some calamity befalls them which they are unable to bear

Then from him is the facilitation for that which is difficult

So Hassān ؓ, who is a prominent Companion, describes the Prophet ﷺ as someone who 'rescues from the terror of humiliation,' and that it is by means of his instruction and guidance to those who emulate and follow him.

As for substantiating [his claim] with His Most High's words about the *Ṣāhib Yāsīn*:²⁵ *If the Beneficent should wish me any harm, their intercession will avail me naught, nor can they save [me]* [Qur'an 36:23], then take a good look! Does this [argument] emanate from a madman, as this verse was revealed concerning the idols which the disbelievers adopted as gods and lords other than Allah Most High?

He Most High said: *Shall I take [other] gods in place of Him when, if the Beneficent should wish me any harm* [Qur'an 36:23]. The exegetes of the Qur'an, including al-Baghawī, ؓ have said, 'Namely, they possess no intercession so as to benefit anyone.' Thus, the idols are not considered as eligible for intercession so as to be equated with the Possessor of the Intercession (*Ṣāhib al-shafā'ah*) ﷺ. What then is this abomination and flagrancy, O great liar? Does a person with the least amount of discernment try to substantiate the denial of the Prophet ﷺ possessing intercession and rescuing of his nation with such a defunct, false [application of the] proof in which he equates idols to the master of mankind—upon him be the best of blessings and greetings—after He Most High has told His Prophet ﷺ: *Verily, your Lord will give you so that you will be well-pleased* [Qur'an 93:5],

■ See footnote 17.

and: *Soon your Lord shall raise you to a Station of Praise!* [Qur'an 17:79], which is the station of intercession?

The Prophet ﷺ has informed us in rigorously-authentic hadiths, which have reached the degree of mass-transmission (*tawātur*), that he is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted with regard to his nation [specifically] and others, as in the case of the greatest intercession and the universality of his intercession in the Qur'anic verses. The *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* have unanimously agreed on this matter, and no one denies certain aspects of the intercession except the *Khawārij* and *Mu'tazilah*. The words of this man ostensibly suggest that he denies the intercession altogether, as in his words 'this is explicit in that whomsoever Allah wills harm, then there is no one to rescue him or to intercede for him'.

It is known that whoever amongst the Muslims is worthy of punishment, or [who] enters it, yet the prophets and angels, or the believers [thereafter], [successfully] intercede for him, then there is no doubt that Allah Most High [originally] intended him harm, yet the intercessors' mediation then benefited him.²⁶

Regarding His Most High's words: *They will say, 'We were not of those who prayed; nor did we feed the destitute. We used to talk vanities with vain talkers, and we used to deny the Day of Judgment, until the Inevitable came to us.' So the intercession of intercessors shall avail them not* [Qur'an 74:43-48], al-Baghawī رحمه الله said, 'Ibn Mas'ūd رحمه الله said, "The angels, the prophets, the martyrs, the righteous and all the believers shall intercede, until no one shall remain in the Fire except for four [groups of people]." Then he recited His Most High's words: *We were not of those who prayed ... we used to deny the Day of Judgment.*' 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn رحمه الله said, 'That intercession is for everyone other than these people whom you hear about.'

Al-Baghawī رحمه الله transmitted with his chain back to Anas رحمه الله, who said:

²⁶ This is according to what can be perceived; for in reality, everything occurs through Allah's will; hence, their intercession only benefits them by His will.

The Prophet's Intercession ❁

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, describing the occupants of the Fire, said, 'As they are being punished, a man from the occupants of Paradise passes by, so a man from them says, "O So-and-so," to which he will reply, "What do you want?" He will say, "Do you not remember a man giving you drink on such and such day?" He will reply, "Is that you?" He will say, "Yes." He will then intercede for him.'

How can a Muslim deny intercession, yet claim that he is from the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*? Or substantiate [his claim in that] with verses [revealed] about idols that are adopted as lords [besides Allah]?

Al-Nawawī ❁, in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, mentions that Qāḍī Iyāḍ ❁ said:

The position (*madhhab*) of *Ahl al-Sunnah* is that intercession in the Afterlife for the sinful believers is rationally-speaking possible, and necessarily proven through revelation because of the explicit verses and reports which in total reach mass-transmission. The righteous early Muslim communities (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and those after them from the *Ahl al-Sunnah* have unanimously agreed on it. The *Khawārij* and *Mu'tazilah* rejected it and adhered to their position of the [sinful] believers eternally abiding in the Hellfire, and justified [that] with His Most High's words: *So the intercession of intercessors shall avail them not*, and His Most High's words: *The transgressors will have no friend nor any intercessor who will be heard* [Qur'an 40:18], even though these verses were [revealed] regarding the disbelievers.

As for their interpretation of the hadiths to mean that they refer to increase in degrees, it is invalid; and the wordings of the hadiths in the book [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*] and elsewhere are explicit in refuting their opinions and [explicit in their meaning of] *removal* of those deserving the Fire.

I say: No one from the *Ahl al-Sunnah* has differed over this matter, as found in all of the books; and Allah Most High knows best.

As for his substantiating it with His Most High's words: *A day on which no soul shall have power at all for another soul* [Qur'an 82:19], then this is with regard to a disbelieving soul, as it shall have no one to intercede for it. Al-Baghawī ؒ said, 'No soul shall have power at all for a disbelieving soul.' Our words, however, are not regarding a disbeliever; rather, our words are regarding the Prophet's intercession ؐ for his nation. How can it not be so when Allah Most High has said regarding him: *We have only sent you as a mercy for all the worlds* [Qur'an 21:107]? Therefore, the entirety of mankind receives [his] mercy in this world by the lifting of punishment, [harmful] metamorphosis and grounds swallowing, and in the Afterlife through the greatest intercession from [relief from] the terror of the Standing [whilst awaiting the Reckoning]; and exclusively for his nation in this world through them being guided by him, and in the Afterlife through his intercession [for them] with its five abovementioned types.

As for his [attempted] substantiation with his Most High's words: *You have no say in the matter* [Qur'an 3:128], then one can argue that this verse was revealed concerning certain disbelievers who would hurt the Prophet ؐ, and so against whom he prayed for destruction, whilst Allah knew that there will be amongst them those who would believe, so He said: *It is not up to you whether He relents toward them or punishes them*. Therefore, this verse is about a certain group of people, whereas our words are regarding the Prophet's benefiting ؐ his nation through intercession; for Allah Most High has informed him with His words: *Your Lord shall give you until you are well-pleased*; and Jibrīl revealed to him that Allah Most High says, 'We shall please you with regard to your nation and not offend you.' Allah Most High did not, in this instance, say, 'You have no say in the matter.'

As for his [attempted] substantiation with his words ؐ to his kinfolk and his piece of flesh [Fāṭimah ؑ], 'I can avail you

nothing against Allah,²⁷ it means: if you do not believe in Allah and His Messenger, I will not be able to avail you of anything against Allah Most High.²⁷ This is due to the proof in his words ❁ 'Save yourself from the Fire', i.e. by accepting Islam. He ❁ said this when it was revealed to him: *Warn your nearest kinfolk* [Qur'an 26:214], as mentioned in *al-Bukhārī* and *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*. Indeed, warning the nearest kinfolk is only through calling them to Islam because of the proof in the other verse, which is His Most High's words: *If they [your kinfolk] disobey you, say: 'I am innocent of what you do'* [Qur'an 26:216]. Al-Baghawī said [in explanation of this verse], '[Innocent] of disbelief and worshipping other than Allah.' This is due to the proof in *al-Bukhārī* that he ❁ ascended Mount Ṣafā, and then called out to the tribes of Quraysh, one by one, and said to them, 'I am a warner to you before a severe punishment,' whereupon they turned their backs and laughed at him; and Abū Lahab said, 'May you perish! You gathered us for this?' Thus, they did not accept the warning from him, and Allah Most High revealed concerning him [Abū Lahab]: *May the hands of Abū Lahab perish* [Qur'an 111:1].

Regarding the verse *Warn your nearest kinfolk*, the author of *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah* said:

In a narration in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, it is mentioned that when he ❁ called Quraysh, they assembled, both the elite and laity, and then he said, 'O Banī Ka'b, save yourself from the Fire! O Banī Murrah, save yourselves from the Fire!' [This continued] until he mentioned the last of the tribes. Then

²⁷ 'Some of them [i.e. hadith scholars] have said that the mention of Fāṭimah ❁ here is an instance of a mix-up [between various narrations] from the narrators because of the proof in his words "unless you declare that there is no god except Allah". She was simply mentioned in another hadith that occurred in Medina wherein he gathered his wives and daughters and said to them, "I can avail you naught against Allah," as an encouragement for them to do righteous actions.' Daḥlān, Aḥmad ibn Zaynī. *al-Sirah al-nabawīyyah*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1415/1995, 1:164.

he said, 'For I do not possess any benefit in this world, nor any portion of the Afterlife, unless you declare that there is no god except Allah. However, you have ties of kinship that I shall maintain through supplication [for you].'

This, therefore, demonstrates that what is meant by his words, 'I can avail you nothing against Allah,' is [that he cannot aid you] if you do not declare that there is no god except Allah and believe [in him]. It is well-known that he ﷺ avails the disbelievers naught [if they persist]; as for after them becoming believers, then he benefits them with the intercession that is established for him ﷺ, as mentioned previously in the Qur'anic verses, hadiths and the consensus. How can the Prophet ﷺ be of no avail to his relatives and his piece of flesh against Allah when Allah has revealed regarding his wives, his piece of flesh and family: *Allah only wishes to remove impurity far from you, O Folk of the Household, and cleanse you with a thorough cleansing* [Qur'an 33:33]. So is this for none other than his sake ﷺ and his nobility in the sight of his Lord? He distinguished his family, after their faith, with that which he has not distinguished anyone of his nation. Or how can it be said that he avails them naught when on the occasion this verse was revealed to him ﷺ, he gathered them and wrapped them with his garment and said, 'O Allah, this is my Household; remove impurities from them and purify them.' So is this of no avail and benefit to them or not? Nay, he shall benefit everyone who believes in him! He Most High said: *The Prophet is closer to the believers than they are to themselves* [Qur'an 33:6]. It is mentioned in *al-Bukhārī* that Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There is no believer except I am closer to him in this world and the Afterlife; read if you wish *The Prophet is closer to the believers than they are to themselves.*' Al-Baghawī mentioned it.

CHAPTER THREE

The World and the Afterlife Being from the Prophet's Generosity ❁

Rejoinder to Objection Two

AS FOR THIS objector's contention against his [al-Būṣīrī's] words:

فَإِنَّ مِنْ جُودِكَ الدُّنْيَا وَضَرَّتَهَا

Verily, this world and its counterpart [i.e. the
Afterlife] are from your generosity,

then it is the drivel of someone suffering from fever and the mumbling of someone muzzled. This is especially [the case with] his attempting to prove his claim with his Most High's words: *Verily, unto Us [belongs] the Afterlife and the former [life of this world]* [Qur'an 92:13].

So it is said to him: Who has told you that the Afterlife and this world belongs to other than Allah? Is it not possible for Allah to give this world to someone who in turn gives it away generously or gives generously of it? Does not all of existence belong to Allah, yet He has given his slaves possession of it? Yet if they then generously give of it, is it no longer considered Allah's property? What then is this fallacious objection and retarded intelligence?

It has been related that this world and the Afterlife were created for his sake ﷺ.²⁸ Moreover, it has been related in *al-Bukhārī* that he ﷺ was more generous than the freewind; so what harm is there in it if he was to generously give from his Lord's property, when he is His greatest beloved, even though the poetic verse is hypothetically speaking.

²⁸ See Appendix One for further elaboration on this verse and the hadith cited by the author in substantiation of it.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Prophet's Knowledge of the Unseen


Rejoinder to Objection Three

AS FOR HIS objection against his [al-Būṣīrī's] words:

وَمِنْ عُلُومِكَ عِلْمُ اللَّوْحِ وَالْقَلَمِ

Your knowledge includes knowledge of the
Tablet and the Pen,

the commentators [on the *Burdah*] have said that what is meant by the 'Tablet' is what people write on, and the 'Pen' is what people write with.²⁹ It is as if he said, 'Amongst your knowledge is the knowledge of what people write on tablets with pens.' So according to this, there is no justification for his objection.

²⁹ For instance, Imam Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qusṭullānī, in his commentary on the *Burdah* titled *Mashāriq al-anwār al-mudīyyah*, when commenting on this verse, says, 'If you say: Your words "The knowledge in the Tablet and the Pen is some of his knowledge" are problematic because Allah Most High has recorded in the Tablet the knowledge of events that includes the Five which Allah Most High exclusively knows, as in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from his words  "No one knows them except Allah"; thus, since the Prophet and the rest of creation do not know these Five, how then is it possible for these to be included amongst his knowledge? Therefore, what is necessarily meant by

They [the commentators] said that it may possibly mean the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*). If so, then the objection proposed by this man is unwarranted, because what he [al-Būṣīrī] means is the knowledge in the [Preserved] Tablet that is other than the Five keys [of the Unseen realm] and what Allah has knowledge of exclusively,³⁰ for this is known through context. This is so in spite of the fact that his statement 'the knowledge of the Tablet' is a possessive construct (*idāfah*) of genus (*jinsiyyah*), i.e. some of the knowledge in the Tablet; and genus (*jins*) is true in some of its members (*afrād*).

There is no doubt that his Sacred Law —especially the Qur'an that was revealed to him, the knowledge that it contains, and the revelation that Allah granted him; He Most High said: *Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire; it is nothing but revelation that is revealed* [Qur'an 53:3-4]—and the Unseen matters that Allah disclosed to him are all from the knowledge that is in the Tablet. In fact, even if we were not to suppose this, this objection is again unnecessary, because it is not necessary that the keys to the Five matters of the Unseen are in the Preserved Tablet; rather, these are found in the Original Book (*Umm al-Kitāb*) which is other than the Tablet.

Al-Baghawī said, 'Ikrimah, relating from Ibn 'Abbās, said, "These are two books: a book other than the Original Book—Allah

the Tablet and the Pen in his words is the genus of tablets and pens on which creation record their knowledge. The reply is: We do not accept that these Five are amongst those things recorded in the Preserved Tablet; for if they were included amongst those things recorded therein, then some of the angels brought nigh, who have access to what is in the Preserved Tablet, would have had access to them. Even if it is conceded that they [the Five] are therein and that Allah has not disclosed them to anyone, even if they are in it, then the meaning is 'your knowledge includes the knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen which creation have access to'. al-Qusṭulānī. *Mashāriq al-anwār al-muḍīyyah*, manuscript.

³⁰ These Five have been referred to in the following verse: *Verily, with Allah is the knowledge of the Hour. It is He who sends down rain, and He who knows what is in the wombs. Nor does any one know what it is that he will earn tomorrow, nor does any one know in what land he is to die. Verily, Allah is Omniscient, Aware* [Qur'an 31:34].

erases and affirms in it whatever He wills. [As for] the Original Book, He does not amend anything thereof.”

‘Aṭā’ relates that Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said, ‘Verily, Allah has a Preserved Tablet formed from white pearl, whose distance is 500 years, and which has covers made from sapphire. Allah has therein 360 moments for every day. Allah erases and affirms [in it] what He wills; and He has the Original Book.’

It is clear from this that the Original Book is other than the Tablet; rather, it is the source (*asl*) of the Tablet, and it may be that the Five are from those matters which are not recorded in the Tablet; and that they are from the mystery of Allah’s knowledge which He exclusively knows and hence did not record them on a tablet.

As for the words of this man that it is necessary for one to say, ‘Say: “None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah” [Qur’an 27:65] and Muhammad,’ [if one accepts the words of the *Burdah*], then such a substantiation is erroneous, because the author of the *Burdah* did not claim that the Prophet ﷺ knows all that Allah knows, since this is impossible, for Allah has knowledge which He exclusively knows and is particular to Him, with no one else having any share therein. Rather, we have concluded that the knowledge that is in the Tablet and the Pen is only a *portion* of what Allah Most High knows and not that which is concealed in His Unseen realm. Whereas what he [the author] affirms for the Prophet ﷺ by way of knowledge of the Tablet and the Pen is the knowledge that Allah Most High imparted to him. What is negated from other than Him Most High in the [abovementioned] verse—based on the fact that the meaning of the definitive particle ‘*al*’ (the) in ‘*al-ghayb*’ (the Unseen) is for all-inclusivity—is to independently have all-encompassing knowledge of everything. As we have established that what is meant by ‘the Unseen’ in the verse is independently and comprehensively knowing everything—which is exclusive to Allah Most High—it is not necessary, upon affirming that the Prophet ﷺ was taught partial knowledge of the Unseen (*ba’d al-ghayb*) by Allah, for one to utter, ‘Say: “None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah [Qur’an 27:65] and Muhammad ﷺ.”’

As for the [the knowledge of the] Unseen that is not according to these two descriptions, then it is possible for others to possess it, because Allah Most High has affirmed that for His messengers and some of His other elite slaves, [though] not independently, as this is disbelief (*kuf*), but, rather, by way of His disclosing and imparting such knowledge to them. He Most High said: *They encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills* [Qur'an 2:255]; *He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone except a messenger whom He has chosen* [Qur'an 72:26-27]; *It is not [the purpose of] Allah to let you know the Unseen. However, Allah chooses of His messengers whom He wills [to receive knowledge thereof]* [Qur'an 3:179]. Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said, 'He reveals to His messengers His Unseen realm; and Muhammad ؐ is the best of them.' Moreover, He Most High said about Khadir ؑ: *Whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves* [Qur'an 18:65]. Al-Bayḍāwī ؒ said in commentary of this verse, 'Namely, the knowledge of the Unseen, i.e. because of the evidence of Khadir's actions in this regard, such as his making a hole in the ship, his killing an innocent soul and his building a wall; and all of these matters are from the Unseen.'

He ؑ said, 'May Allah have mercy on Mūsā; had he been patient, he would have seen wonders,'³¹ i.e. from the things that Khadir—upon him be peace—did of matters from the Unseen which Allah taught him from Himself. Therefore, what precludes the knowledge of what is in the Tablet and the Pen from being some of the Messenger of Allah's knowledge ؑ that is disclosed to him by Allah?

It has been narrated in a rigorously-authentic hadith that the Messenger of Allah ؐ said:

³¹ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd (3984) with a slight variation in the wording: 'When the Messenger of Allah would supplicate, he would begin with himself and say, "May Allah's mercy be upon us and on Mūsā; had he been patient, he would have seen wonders from his companion. But he [instead] said: *If I ask you about anything else, keep not company with me. You have seen enough apologies from me* [Qur'an 18:76]."'

The Prophet's Knowledge ﷺ of the Unseen

I saw my Lord in a dream in the form of a young man who had hair down to his earlobes (*wafrāh*). He said, 'O Muhammad, what is the loftiest assembly [of angels] disputing about?' I replied, 'I do not know.' He then placed his palm between my shoulders, and I found its coolness in my chest, and then knew what is in the heavens and the earth; and he recited: *Likewise We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he may be of those who have certainty* [Qur'an 6:75]. (Al-Tirmidhī and al-Dārimī narrated it.)

In another narration related by Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī, [he ﷺ says], 'Then everything became manifest to me and I knew.' He [al-Tirmidhī] said, 'This is a sound, rigorously-authentic hadith, and I asked Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl—i.e. al-Bukhārī—about [the authenticity of] this hadith, to which he replied, "This is a rigorously-authentic hadith." Al-Tibrizī mentioned it in *Mishkāh al-maṣābiḥ*.

Al-Tibī ﷺ said in his *Hāshiyah* on *al-Mishkāh*, 'Its meaning is: Just as Ibrāhīm ﷺ was shown the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that was disclosed to him, likewise the doors of the Unseen realm have been opened for me until I knew the entities and attributes that are in them, both the visible and the unseen.'

Numerous hadiths have been related in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* wherein the Prophet ﷺ informs about matters of the Unseen.

Allah Most High said: *It is not [the purpose] of Allah to leave the believers in the present state until He separates the wicked from the good. It is not [the purpose of] Allah to let you know the Unseen; however, Allah chooses of His messengers whom He wills [to receive knowledge thereof]* [Qur'an 3:179]. Al-Baghawī ﷺ and others have mentioned that the reason behind the revelation of this verse is that one of the Prophet's camels ﷺ went missing during one of his journeys, so one of the Hypocrites said, 'Muhammad claims that his nation after him will conquer the palaces of Chosroes and Caesar, yet he does not know where is his camel.' When that [remark] reached the Prophet ﷺ, he said, 'It is in such and such place in such and such land; its halter has got tangled in a tree.' So they went about

looking for it and found it just as he ﷺ said. Then he ﷺ got angry with the Hypocrites and said, 'What is wrong with certain people that they denigrate my knowledge? For by the One in whose hand is my soul, you will not ask me in this position of mine about anything except I will inform you about it.' So a man, who was attributed to other than his father, stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, who is my father?' He ﷺ replied, 'Your father is Hudhāfah.' Another man stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, where is my father [who had passed away]?' He ﷺ replied, 'In the Fire.' Thereupon, 'Umar ﷺ got down on his knees and said, 'We are pleased with Allah as a lord, Islam as a religion and with Muhammad as a prophet. O Messenger of Allah, pardon us!' Thereupon his anger subsided—or as he said. His words ﷺ 'What is wrong with certain people that they denigrate my knowledge' mean 'the knowledge of the Unseen that Allah Most High has disclosed to me,' because the discussion concerns it, and not anything else. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the two men only asked about an unseen matter.

Moreover, it is narrated in the rigorously-authentic hadiths, such as the hadith of *al-Bukhārī* and others from the hadith of Hudhayfah ﷺ: 'The Prophet ﷺ informed us about everything that will occur until the Day of Resurrection, until those destined for Paradise will enter Paradise and those destined for the Fire will enter the Fire. Even when we see a bird that flaps its wings, we remember some information about it.' The hadiths regarding this are many, and they are mentioned by Qādī Iyāḍ in [his work] *al-Shifā'*. Thus, it has become evident that whoever denigrates his knowledge ﷺ is a hypocrite.

The author of *al-Iqnā'*,³² in the primary text (*matn*) in the Chapter on Marriage (*bāb al-nikāḥ*) on the enumeration of those matters by which he ﷺ has been distinguished (*khaṣā'is*) and his

³² That is Imam Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsā al-Ḥajjāwī (d. 960 AH), originally from Ḥajjah, a village in Nablus, Palestine, who later settled in Ṣālihiyyah, Damascus, and became its resident Ḥanbalī mufti.

miracles, said, 'All of creation, from Ādam to those after him, were presented to him, just as Ādam was taught the names of everything.' Its commentator, al-Buhārī رحمہ اللہ, said:

[That is] because of what is in the hadith of Daylamī: 'The world was depicted to me in [the form of] water and clay; and I knew everything (*'alimtu al-ashyā' kullahā*), just as Ādam was taught all the names.' Moreover, his nation was presented to him in its entirety until he saw them, [and that is] because of what is in the hadith of al-Ṭabarānī: 'My nation, its first and last, was presented to me yesterday in this room: they were portrayed for me in [the form of] water and clay until I knew one of them better than one of you knows his companion.' Furthermore, everything that will occur in his nation until the establishment of the Final Hour was presented to him, because of what is in the hadith of Aḥmad and others: 'I saw what my nation will encounter after me and their shedding of each other's blood.'

If this is realised, then it is clear that the words of this man are sheer ignorance and a distortion of things from their facts without acknowledgement.

Now that which we have established [in the above discussion] is based on the fact that Allah Most High reveals the Unseen to His prophets and some of their followers, with the exception of the Five. Nevertheless, a group of scholars have transmitted that there is nothing to preclude Allah from informing and revealing the Five [exclusive matters] to our Prophet ﷺ and others who are proximate to Him.³³ We hastily present hereunder citations from those whom we have come across who have transmitted this.

³³ Amongst those scholars who have mentioned this is Imam Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Khaṣā'is al-kubrā*, where he says, 'Some of them [the scholars] were of the opinion that he ﷺ was given knowledge of the Five, and that he knew the time of the Last Hour and [knew] the soul, yet he was ordered to conceal that.' Likewise, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī al-Mālikī said in his

Al-Nawawī ﷺ said in his *Fatāwā*:

Legal issue (*mas'alah*): What is the meaning of His Most High's words: Say, 'No one in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen except Allah' and the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, 'No one knows what will happen tomorrow except Allah,' and similar statements from the Qur'an and the hadith, notwithstanding that the knowledge of what will happen tomorrow has occurred in the prophetic miracles (*mu'jizāt*) of the prophets ﷺ and the non-prophetic miracles (*karāmāt*) of the friends of Allah ﷺ?

Reply: The meaning is that no one knows such matters independently. In other words, Allah imparting the knowledge of that to others is possible, as it is no longer considered as independently known [in such a case].

marginalia on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and his commentary on the classic poem on creed *Jawharah al-tawhīd*: 'The fact of the matter is that our Prophet did not leave this world until He revealed to him those Five, though he was ordered to conceal them.' Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī also mentioned this in his commentary on the *Burdah* and his commentary on *Jawharah al-tawhīd* titled *Tuhfah al-murīd*, as did Imam al-Sha'rānī in his *Kashf al-ghummah*. Regarding the knowledge of the Last Hour, Shaykh Ālūsī says in his *tafsīr Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* when commenting on the thirty-fourth verse of *Sūrah Luqmān*, 'It is possible that Allah Most High had revealed to His beloved ﷺ the time of its [the Last Hour] establishment in a complete manner, though not in a manner that resembles His Most High's knowledge of it. However, He—Glorified is He—obliged him ﷺ to conceal it for a wisdom, and that is from his distinctions ﷺ; although I do not possess [an evidence] to definitively assert that.'

'Allāmah al-Muḥaddith Muḥammad ibn Ja'far al-Kattānī mentions in *Jalā' al-qulūb* that: 'scholars are divided into two groups regarding these Five and the soul (*rūḥ*): a group opined that he ﷺ did not know these; rather, these are matters which Allah knows exclusively and has not revealed to anyone at all in creation [...] and this is the position of the majority of the *muḥaddiths*, scholars and the preferred opinion amongst the majority of the jurists (*fuqahā'*). Another group opined that he ﷺ did not leave this world until Allah revealed to him these and others of all those matters which He [previously] concealed from him [...] and this is the opinion of the erudite scholars (*muḥaqqiqīn*) and many of the elite and the friends of Allah, who definitively asserted it' (al-Kattānī, Muḥammad ibn Ja'far. *Jalā' al-qulūb*. 1st edn. Cairo: Maktabah al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, 1430/2009, 1:235).

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Shaykh 'Alī al-Qārī al-Hanafī said in *Sharh al-Mishkāl*:

If you say: How do you reconcile between the verse, i.e. His Most High's words: *Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah. It is He who sends down rain, and He who knows what is in the wombs* [Qur'an 31:34] and between what is popularly known concerning [people] being informed about Unseen matters? For example, the great Shaykh Abū 'Abd-Allāh said in his *Mu'taqad*, 'We believe that a slave is transported in states until he reaches a point of spiritual aptitude (*na't al-rūhāniyyah*), whence he knows the Unseen, the earth is shrunk for him, he walks on water and becomes invisible.

The reply: The Unseen has preliminaries (*mabādi'*) and points of succession (*lawāḥiq*). Its preliminaries are not revealed to any angel that is close to Allah or a prophet [who is] sent. Yet, as for the points of succession, then they are what Allah has revealed to some of those beloved to Him from the Tablet of His knowledge. Thus, the absolute Unseen (*al-ghayb al-mutlaq*) is thereby excluded [in such an attribution] and becomes a relative Unseen (*ghayb idāfi*) [in such an instance]; and the latter occurs when the sanctified soul is illuminated and its illumination and radiance increases, together with diligence in knowledge and action, and the pouring of divine lights [manifest], until eventually the light becomes intense and spreads in the vast space of his heart; thereupon, the inscriptions that are engraved in the Preserved Tablet are reflected in it [his heart] and he gains insight into Unseen matters and has disposal over the bodies of the lower world; rather, the most sanctified outpouring (*al-fayyād al-aqdas*) becomes manifest with gnosis that is the noblest gift, so what about anything else?

Moreover, he ['Alī al-Qārī] said in the abovementioned commentary regarding his words "The keys to the Unseen are Five which no one knows except Allah": 'Meaning, no one knows

their *details* except Him, and no one knows them generally by way of preternatural phenomena except through Allah Most High.' He ﷺ added, 'So if you say: The prophets and the friends of Allah have been informed about many of those things, so how is there a restriction (*ḥaṣr*) [of them being only known by Allah]? I reply: The restriction is in relation to their universals, not their particulars. He Most High said, *He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone except a messenger whom He has chosen* [Qur'an 72:26-27].'

Al-Munāwī ﷺ said, in his larger commentary on *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghir*,³⁴ regarding the interpretation of his words ﷺ 'The keys to the Unseen are Five':

As for His Most High's words *No one knows them except Him*, then it has been interpreted as: no one knows them intrinsically by himself (*bi dhātihī*) and from himself (*min dhātihī*) except Him. They may, however, be known through Allah Most High's revealing the knowledge of them, as there are those who know them. We have found that to be the case for more than one person, just as we have seen a group who knew when they shall die and knew what is in the wombs during a woman's pregnancy; rather, what is before it.

Qāḍi Iyād ﷺ said in *al-Shifā'*:

Amongst those, namely his distinct signs of honour (*khaṣā'is*) ﷺ and his splendid miracles, are the Unseen matters that he was cognisant of, both those that had passed and those that were to come. In fact, the depths of the hadiths on this subject cannot be encompassed and their deluge cannot be exhausted. Thus, this miracle is amongst his miracles that are known by certainty, whose reports have reached

³⁴ Namely, al-Munāwī's multi-volume commentary on Imam al-Suyūṭī's hadith compilation *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghir*, entitled *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*. He also has another commentary, which is an abridgement to the aforementioned, in two volumes entitled *al-Taysir fī sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghir*.

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us by mass-transmission, due to their many narrators and the agreement of their [hadiths'] meanings conveying the disclosure of the Unseen.

He then mentioned a selection of rigorously-authentic hadiths [on the topic].

Al-Shihāb al-Khafājī said in his commentary [on the *Shifā'*]:

This does not contradict those verses of the Qur'an demonstrating that no one except Allah knows the Unseen, because the knowledge of it [the Unseen] that is negated [from creation] is that which is without a medium (*wāsitah*). With regards to that which he is acquainted with through Allah's revealing it [to him], then that is a matter of fact, due to His Most High's words: *He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone except a messenger whom He has chosen* [Qur'an 72:26-27].

In his commentary on the abridgement of *al-Bukhārī*, the Hāfiz, the Hujjah, Ibn Abī Jamrah ؓ said regarding his words ﷺ 'There is nothing that I was not shown except I have seen it in this position of mine, even Paradise and the Hellfire; and it has been revealed to me that you will be tried in your graves': 'The third perspective: his words ﷺ "There is nothing that I have not been shown except I have seen it in this position of mine" establish a proof that he ﷺ did not see all of the Unseen prior to this occasion, but rather some [of it], and that on this occasion his vision of all of those things was completed for him.' He then said, 'Are all of the Unseen matters meant here, or only those that he is required to inform his nation of and those specifically related to his ennobled essence? The answer is that this hadith bears both possibilities, and what is apparent of the two is the latter possibility.'

In his commentary [also] on the abridgement of *al-Bukhārī*, 'Allāmah al-Ujhūrī ؓ said:

His statement ﷺ 'There is nothing that I have not been shown' suggests that he knew the Five matters exclusively known by Allah, even though 'seen' (*ru'yah*) in the hadith has been interpreted as knowing (*'ilmīyyah*). So contemplate whether the knowledge of the rain descending and what follows it is particular to his time ﷺ, or in his time and thereafter until the Day of Resurrection.

Regarding His Most High's words: *Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah* [Qur'an 31:34], some of the commentators [on the Qur'an] have said, 'As for the rest, i.e. other than the [Final] Hour, then they are known by *those who carry out [Allah's] various commands* [Qur'an 79:5], [i.e.] the angel of rain, the angel of [taking] souls and the angel of death.

If you say: It has been mentioned in the hadith 'in Five that no one except Allah knows' and he [the Prophet ﷺ] interpreted them with what is mentioned in the verse, then I say: The restriction [that no one except Allah knows] is relative (*idāfi*) not literal (*ḥaqīqī*), and that what is meant is the negation of knowledge from the astrologers and soothsayers (*atibbā'*) who claim it.

Ibn Rajab mentioned in *Sharḥ al-Arba'īn al-Nawawīyyah*: 'The angel that is entrusted with the womb says, "My Lord, [is it] created or left un-created?" If it is created, he asks, "Male or female? Damned or felicitous? What is its lifespan? What is its legacy? In which land will it die?" Then it is said, "Go to the Book, for you shall find in it the narrative of this semen-drop." This, therefore, proves that Allah reveals some of the Five to some of His creation, which [in this case] is the angel. Yet the Prophet is more worthy, as he is explicitly referred to in His Most High's words: *He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone except a messenger whom He has chosen* [Qur'an 72:26-27]. Furthermore, He Most High has said regarding 'Īsā, upon him be peace: *I declare to you what you eat, and what you store in your houses* [Qur'an 3:49]; and regarding Yūsuf, upon him be peace: *The food which you are given [daily] shall not come to you but I shall tell you the interpretation of it before it comes to you. This is of that*

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which my Lord has taught me [Qur'an 12:37], and other such verses and hadiths. It is necessary for whoever is unacquainted to ask the people of remembrance [i.e. the scholars] and not object to the scholars (*ahl al-'ilm*); and Allah Most High knows best.

'Allāmah al-Madābighī ﷺ said in his *Hāshiyah* on the *Sharh al-Arba'in* [Commentary on the 'Forty Hadiths' [of Imam al-Nawawī] by Ibn Hajar]: 'The truth of the matter, as mentioned by a group of scholars, is that Allah did not take our Prophet's life, upon him be blessings and peace, until he revealed to him everything that He had [previously] concealed from him. He, however, ordered him to conceal some of that and to disclose some.'

Al-Subkī ﷺ said in *Mu'id al-ni'am*:

It is from their right (*ḥaqq*), i.e. the friends (*awliyā'*) [of Allah], to refrain with permission from disclosing the matters of the Unseen which Allah reveals to them and the miracles with which He distinguishes them. Moreover, they consider it impermissible to reveal them without some benefit, and they do not reveal them except after permission [from Him], due to some religious benefit. Just as Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq said to 'Ā'ishah—may Allah be well pleased with them both—, 'It is only your two brothers and two sisters, so distribute it [the inheritance] according to the Book of Allah.' 'Ā'ishah ﷺ replied, 'There is only Asmā', so who is the other [sister]?' Abū Bakr ﷺ replied, 'The one Bint Khārijah is pregnant with, and I think it is a girl.' Thus, he informed her that his wife was pregnant with a girl, and that is considered amongst *what is in the wombs, which no one except Allah knows*; however, Allah Most High disclosed it to him on that occasion, and so he knowledge is from Allah Most High's knowledge.

Ibn Taymiyyah, in *al-Furqān*, mentioned that the meaning of our master 'Umar's statement ﷺ 'Draw near to the mouths of the obedient, as true matters (*umūr ṣādiqah*) are disclosed to them' is: 'Namely, the knowledge of unveiling (*'ilm al-mukāshafah*).' He then said in another place in *al-Furqān*:

That is because preternatural phenomena maybe something from the genus of knowledge (*jins al-‘ilm*), like the unveilings [of the Unseen realm], and that which maybe from the genus of power and sovereignty, such as preternatural deeds that transcend customary behaviour. Indeed, all that Allah grants to his slave from these matters and others, if he thereby utilises them for what Allah loves and is pleased with, and which brings him near to Him and which Allah and His Messenger enjoin, his elevation and proximity to Allah Most High is thereby increased, as does his rank. If, on the other hand, he employs it for what has been prohibited by Allah and His Messenger, such as polytheism, oppression and obscene acts, then he is worthy of blame and punishment. If Allah does not rectify him [by inspiring him] with sincere repentance or good deeds that erase the bad ones, then he will be amongst the rest of the sinners.

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned, in his book *al-Rūh*, a number of rigorously-authentic hadiths and narrations about the knowledge that the occupants of the graves have about the condition of the people in this world, [which are] matters *which no one except Allah knows*: matters which have occurred or shall occur. This occurred with many of the Companions and those after them, and Ibn al-Qayyim spoke in support of this matter.

I say: A group of scholars have inferred from the words of the Prophet ﷺ to Jibrīl ﷺ regarding the knowledge of the Final Hour ‘the one asked about it has no more knowledge than the one asking’ as meaning: I and you with regard to the knowledge [of the Final Hour] are equal. This is so because he negated the superlative that demonstrates addition [to the quality, in this case knowledge]. Thus, the meaning of it is: I am no more knowledgeable than you; rather, just as you know it, I also know it.

In *al-Bukhārī* and others it is established that he ﷺ pointed to the places where the leaders of Quraysh would meet their death, and none of them fell in other than their [designated] place of

death. Hence he knew on what [piece] of earth these souls shall die, and this one of the Five.

He ﷺ foretold of events that will occur after him until the Day of Resurrection, and so they transpired as he foretold, and this is from those things which *no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow*.

He ﷺ foretold of the rainfall after his death, as mentioned in the hadith which Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*, when a Companion complained and came to the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. So he [the Prophet ﷺ] said, 'Go to 'Umar and tell him that they shall be given rain,' and so it transpired as he said.

Resolving this ambiguity and reconciling between the Qur'anic verses and the rigorously-authentic hadiths through this consideration is absolutely necessary, otherwise it will entail contradiction and lies with regards to factual reports and through Allah Most High is success.

Taking Refuge in the Prophet ﷺ

AS FOR HIS objection to his [al-Būṣīrī's] words:

يَا أَكْرَمَ الْخَلْقِ مَا لِي مَنْ أَلُوذُ بِهِ

O noblest of creation, I have no one to take refuge in

سِوَاكَ عِنْدَ حُلُولِ الْحَادِثِ الْعَمَمِ

Except you when the all-encompassing
catastrophe befalls,

then it is poor understanding and lack of knowledge. This is because he reads the verse 'I have no one to take refuge in except you' as a layman who has the same level of poor understanding, whereby he says: How is this restriction? He therefore understands that the author was here speaking in the absolute sense, which is not what he meant, nor is it the meaning of the verse. Rather, its meaning is apparent to whoever has knowledge, because the meaning of the verse according to what the words convey—*notwithstanding the intent of the poet and the circumstantial and verbal context*—is that he is saying: O noblest of creation to his Lord, I have no one to take refuge in other than you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls, which will encompass all of creation, and shall be on the Day of Resurrection when mankind will be standing [awaiting judgment].

Taking Refuge in the Prophet ﷺ

It has been narrated in the rigorously-authentic hadiths that the sun shall draw near to mankind on that day at a distance of one mile, and people shall be so congested that there will be 70,000 feet on every foot and bridled by their sweat. Furthermore, the Hellfire shall be kindled; and the Compeller, Almighty and Majestic, shall be angry and all of the prophets and the messengers will say, 'Myself, myself!' Then, as mentioned in *al-Bukhārī*, mankind shall look for someone to intercede for them: they shall ask Ādam for help, then in turn Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Isā, until [finally] they shall come to our Prophet ﷺ, and he shall say, 'I am for it; I am for it!' He will then intercede for all of creation in regard to that terrifying situation, from whose intensity people shall desire to escape, even if they were ordered to be thrown in the Fire, as has been narrated in the authentic reports.

Do you see any of the messengers sought for refuge, or any of creation in whom refuge is sought, other than him ﷺ in this all-encompassing catastrophe—not in all situations, but rather solely in this particular one? This is when the all-encompassing ('*amam*') catastrophe befalls—['*amam* is] an active participle such as *ḥadhar* and *ḥaḍal*. He [al-Būṣīrī] does not mean: I do not have anyone to take refuge in other than you absolutely [in all situations]. Rather, it is restricted to this occasion, in which rigorously-authentic hadiths identify none other than him for the task; in fact, even the other resolute messengers ('*ūl al-'azm*') shall excuse themselves to mankind on that day.

In addition, the intent here is the taking of refuge in him by way of [seeking his] intercession, as is demonstrated by his words in the following verses:

وَلَنْ يَضِيقَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ جَاهُكَ بِي

Your status (*jāh*), O Messenger of Allah,
will not decrease on my account

إِذَا الْكَرِيمُ تَجَلَّى بِاسْمِ مُنْتَقِمٍ

When the Generous shall manifest Himself with the name
Avenger

This is the case, as his status refers to his intercession—which is the conclusion of all of the great scholars who have commented on this ode. Shaykh Khālid al-Azhārī says in his commentary on this ode:

'*Alūdh*' means 'I take refuge'. '*Siwāka*' means 'other than you'. '*Hulūl al-bādith al-'amam*' [the befalling of the all-encompassing catastrophe] is the terror on the Day of Resurrection that encompasses all of creation. Its meaning is: O noblest of all creation, I do not have anyone other than you, i.e. from amongst creation, to take refuge in on the Day of Resurrection from its all-encompassing terror, when mankind shall look in anticipation to your elevated rank; and your status will not decrease on my account when the matter intensifies and patience is exhausted, for you are the greatest creation to Allah and the one who is relied on for intercession.

Other commentators have said similar things to the above.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUPPLICATION (*DU'A*) AND CALLING ON SOMEONE (*NIDA'*)

What remains is their assertion that the words 'O noblest of creation' are a supplication (*du'ā*). Yet, in reality, it is calling on [someone] (*nidā'*), and there is no justification to declare someone a disbeliever for it. If calling on [someone] is harmful [to one's faith] and an act of worship, as they claim, then it will be necessary that no one is called on whether he is alive or dead, because it is unknown—both legally and conventionally speaking—for a single thing to be an act of obedience (*tā'ah*) in relation to a living person

whilst being an act of worship (*'ibādah*) for someone deceased or absent. The only supplication (*du'ā'*) which is an act of worship is to take other than Allah as a lord and god, which is something that the most ignorant of Muslims does not intend, let alone the great scholars who act on their knowledge (*akābir al-'ulamā' al-'āmilīn*).

The proof that calling on and requesting from those deceased and absent is not an act of worship—rather, it is something enjoined by the Sacred Law—comes from verses [of the Qur'an], hadiths, reports [from the Companions] and statements of the great scholars from the [schools of the] four righteous Imams, as you shall come to fully realise. But do not be hasty; instead, be patient, contemplate and comprehend the proofs that you will peruse, and decide for yourself; and be fair and do not follow whim, lest it cause you to deviate from Allah's path.

THE FIRST PROOF

His Most High's words: *O you who believe, be mindful of your duty to Allah, and seek the means of approach unto Him* [Qur'an 5:35]. Regarding His Most High's words in the other verse: *seeking the means of approach unto their Lord, which of them shall be the nearest; they hope for His mercy and they fear His punishment* [Qur'an 17: 57], al-Baghawī said in his *Tafsīr*, 'It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه [that he said], "*The means of approach* is anything utilised by one to draw near to Allah, namely which of them is closest to Allah so that they may make *tawassul* through him.' Thus, *the means of approach* is [here] universal and inclusive of entities, actions and words; and claiming that it is confined to actions is baseless arbitrariness, despite the fact that virtuous entities are superior than actions that emanate from them, which is especially the case with our Prophet ﷺ, as he was created from a light created by Allah Most High, as mentioned in the hadith of Jābir رضي الله عنه.³⁵

³⁵ See Appendix Two for a discussion on the hadith about the Prophet ﷺ being created from a light.

THE SECOND PROOF

[The second proof is] His Most High's words: *They will have no power to intercede, save him who has made a covenant with the All-Merciful* [Qur'an 19:87]. The exegetes [of the Qur'an] have said that the *covenant* is the declaration 'There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. Some have said that it means that intercessors shall not be able to intercede except for those who have made a covenant with the All-Merciful, namely the believers, the people who profess 'There is no god except Allah'. It has [also] been said that Allah has granted intercession to the believers; so no one intercedes except someone who testifies that there is no god except Allah, i.e. no one but a believer is able to intercede.

In any case, since Allah Most High has informed [us] that He has given the believers the power to intercede, then seeking it from someone who possesses it through Allah's granting him possession of it cannot be objected to, such as someone who seeks wealth, or something else, from someone to whom Allah has granted its possession.

What is intended by the one calling on him ﷺ, and taking him as an intermediary (*al-mutawassil bihi*), is only his intercession, and his intercession ﷺ is supplication (*du'ā*), which, as related in the rigorously-authentic hadiths, will occur from him [the Prophet ﷺ] and the rest of the deceased believers.

Ibn Rajab said:

It is authentically established that all of the actions [of the believers] are presented to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ because he is like a father to them. Al-Bazzār narrates in his *Musnad*: 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "My life is good for you: you perform actions and judgments are passed for you. Furthermore, my passing away is good for you: your actions are presented to me; so whatever good I see, I praise Allah for it; and whatever evil I see, I seek Allah's forgiveness for you."'

Moreover, supplication from the living and the dead is [a type of] intercession, as mentioned regarding the funeral prayer when one supplicates, 'We have come to You, asking you, as intercessors for him before You,' and their asking for forgiveness is an intercession and a supplication, as is apparent.

As for the rigorously-authentic hadiths in which the noble Companions seek [intercession] from him ﷺ without condemnation from anyone, then they are many and well known; and he did not say to them, 'Until Allah permits me,' nor, 'You have sought from me before permission [from Allah] and have therefore associated partners with Allah (*shirk*).' Hence it proves that it is absolutely permissible: during his life and [after] death ﷺ, because he ﷺ, after his death, is considered alive in his grave by consensus.³⁶

THE THIRD PROOF

The first hadith [proof] is al-Tirmidhī narrated that Anas ﷺ said:

I said, 'Intercede for me, O Messenger of Allah, on the Day of Resurrection.' He ﷺ replied, 'I will do so.' So I asked, 'Where shall I look for you?' He ﷺ replied, 'The first place to look for me is the bridge (*ṣirāt*).'³⁷ I said, 'What if I do not find you there?' He ﷺ replied, 'Then look for me at the scale (*mizān*).'³⁸ I said, 'What if I do not encounter you there?' He ﷺ replied, 'Then look for me at the water pool (*ḥawḍ*), for I will not be missed in all three of these places.'

³⁶ In fact, it is established that all the prophets are alive in their graves praying. It has been narrated by Muslim and al-Nasā'ī that Anas ﷺ said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "On the night that I was taken on the journey (*isrā'*), I was brought to Mūsā who was standing praying in his grave at the red dune." Al-Bayhaqī and Abū Ya'ī' relate that Anas ﷺ said, 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The prophets are alive in their graves praying." Al-'Allāmah al-Munāwī said, 'It is a rigorously-authentic hadith.' Moreover, al-Hāfiẓ al-Bayhaqī has a treatise specifically on the life of the prophets—may Allah Most High's blessings be upon our Prophet and upon them all.

If someone was to argue that this is seeking his intercession during his lifetime, which is permissible, then we would reply: No, he sought from him something that is not in his lifetime, which is his intercession on the Day of Resurrection, and whatever is permissible to be requested from him during his lifetime is also permissible to be requested from him after death; and whoever forbids that must provide proof that the Prophet ﷺ prohibited that in a hadith. In fact, since you state that requesting is in and of itself an act of worship, it necessarily entails that there is no difference between life and death, because an act of worship is forbidden in both circumstances!

Furthermore, what do you say regarding his words ﷺ when al-Siddiq [Abū Bakr] ؓ said, 'Stand up and let us seek help from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against this Hypocrite,' to which he ؓ replied, 'Help is not sought from me; help is only sought from Allah?'³⁷ [Now he said this] even though he, in accordance with your opinion, was alive and able; and Allah has informed about Mūsā ؑ: *One of his people called on him for help against his enemy* [Qur'an 28:15]!

THE FOURTH PROOF

The second hadith [proof] is what Imam Aḥmad mentioned in his *Musnad*, narrating from Anas ؓ:

He [Anas] said, 'I have never smelt amber or musk, nor anything else more fragrant than the Messenger of Allah's natural scent ﷺ.' Thābit ؓ said, 'I said, "O Abū Ḥamzah [Anas]! Is it not as if you are looking at the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and as if you can hear his tone?"' He replied, 'Most definitely, by Allah! I hope to meet him on the Day of Resurrection and say, "O Messenger of Allah, your small servant, Anas."'

³⁷ Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, See p 69.

Moreover, [it is narrated] in *al-Jāmi' al-ṣagbīr*.

One of the things that he [the Prophet ﷺ] used to say to his servant was, 'Do you have a need?' Until one day, he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, my need.' He ﷺ replied, 'What is your need?' He said, 'My need is that you intercede for me on the Day of Resurrection.' He ﷺ replied, 'Who guided you to this?' He ﷺ said, 'My Lord Almighty and Majestic.' He ﷺ replied, 'If it is a must, then assist me by prostrating profusely [i.e. pray in abundance].'

Imam Aḥmad narrated it. Al-Tirmidhī said [about the hadith], 'Its narrators are the same narrators found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* [of Imam al-Bukhārī].' Furthermore, al-Suyūṭī alluded to its authenticity, and al-Haythamī said [about it], 'Its narrators are that of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.' Al-Munāwī mentioned it in his larger commentary (*al-Kabīr*).

THE FIFTH PROOF

There is also the hadith narrated on the authority of 'Uthmān ibn Hunayf ﷺ that a blind man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, supplicate Allah for me so that He restores my eyesight.' He [the Prophet ﷺ] replied, 'If you want, I will supplicate for you; and if you want, then be patient.' He replied, 'Supplicate for me,' so he ﷺ said, 'Go to the place of ablution, perform ablution and pray two units of prayer and supplicate with the following supplication: "O Allah, I ask You and turn to You through Your Prophet Muhammad. O Muhammad, I turn through you to my Lord in this need of mine so that it may be fulfilled. O Allah, accept his intercession for me." In addition, if you have [any other] need, then do likewise.' So the blind man went off and did just that for himself in the absence of the Prophet ﷺ.

Al-Bayhaqī ﷺ said on the authority of the narrator, 'The blind man stood up with his eyesight [restored].'

I say: It is evident that this hadith is one of the proofs of his prophethood ﷺ and [one of] his miracles, since the blind man was given eyesight by virtue of his blessings ﷺ, just as 'Isā ibn Maryam

would heal those blind at birth and the lepers, and bring the dead back to life by Allah's permission.

It was narrated by al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasā'ī, al-Bayhaqī (who graded it as rigorously authentic) and al-Hākim (who said, '[It is] according to the condition of al-Bukhārī and Muslim,'³⁸ and Hāfiz al-Dhahabī confirmed [i.e. its authenticity]). Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned this hadith in *al-Fatāwā*, and he affirmed it and did not express any criticism of it. Moreover, the hadith specialists used it as a title heading: 'The chapter on someone who has a need from Allah or anyone of His creation'. It was mentioned by Hāfiz al-Jazarī in *al-Hisn al-ḥaṣin*, Hāfiz al-Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghīr* and its commentary by al-Munāwī, and Shaykh 'Alī al-Qārī al-Hanafī, who said:

His words 'O Muhammad' is turning one's attention and pleading to him, so that he may thereby turn with his soul to Allah Most High and relieve the one pleading from needing anyone else, and [free him] from seeking mediation (*ta'awwul*) through other than his Master, saying, 'I turn through you,' i.e. through your *dhari'ah*: *dhari'ah* is a means of approach, and the [preposition] *bā* [meaning 'through'] is one denoting the seeking of assistance, 'to my Lord in this need of mine' which is understood, 'so that it may be fulfilled'; and it is possible that the meaning is 'so that Allah may fulfil the need for your sake'; rather, this is what is apparent.

In another edition [it reads] 'so that you fulfil (*li taqḍi*)' in the active voice, meaning: that you, O Messenger of Allah, fulfil the need for me; namely, that you be a means for the fulfilment of my need and attaining my wish; thus, the ascription is figurative.

Regarding his words in the hadith 'O Muhammad, I turn through you in this need of mine so that it may be fulfilled',

³⁸ Meaning the narrators in its chain of transmission are the same as those found in the authentic collections of Imams al-Bukhārī and Muslim and thus endorsed by them.

those who permit it have said that it is calling on [him] (*nida'*), requesting from him ﷺ, seeking his help (*istighāthah*) and *tawassul* through him, whilst the Prophet ﷺ was absent in each case, and who furthermore told him, 'If you have a need, then do likewise.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is exonerated from teaching his nation polytheism (*shirk*), when he has in fact been sent to eradicate it. It therefore proves that calling on and requesting from him is not *shirk* as the *Khawārij* suggest.

Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah's response to this hadith was that the blind man visualised the Prophet ﷺ and addressed him just as a person addresses someone whom he loves or hates by picturing him, even though that person is absent. Such an interpretation is strange, since calling on an image and requesting from it despite it being illusionary and imaginary is a stronger evidence against those forbidding it.

This rigorously-authentic hadith is therefore a proof for those who regard it as permissible to call on the Prophet ﷺ in his absence and after his death, and the poet [al-Būṣīrī] is of those who hold that position.

The proof that this hadith is generally applicable is what al-Bayhaqī and al-Ṭabarānī narrate with an acceptable chain of transmission from 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf (the narrator of the first hadith) that a man used to frequent 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān ؓ for a need of his, and he ['Uthmān ibn 'Affān] would not pay any attention to him nor look into his need; so he complained to the Companion Ibn Ḥunayf ؓ. He [Ibn Ḥunayf] therefore taught him to do the same as what the blind man had done. He did so and his need was fulfilled.

The words of Ibn Taymiyyah about people having two opinions regarding the hadith are to come: an opinion supporting the permissibility of *tawassul* through him, i.e. requesting him to supplicate in his lifetime; and an opinion for the permissibility of that in his lifetime and after his death, in his presence and absence. According to both opinions, there is no prohibition for the author of the *Burdah* seeking his intercession ﷺ during his life, because

he, according to the first opinion, is requesting his supplication while he is alive in his grave; and according to the second opinion, it is apparent.

Ibn Taymiyyah agreed with Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, the Sultan of the Ulema, on the permissibility of requesting and *tawassul* through him ﷺ due to the hadith of the blind man; hence calling on him ﷺ and requesting from him is unanimously agreed upon; and the opinions of the early Muslims (*salaf*) and the latter ones (*khalaf*), and their concurrence on its permissibility, are to follow.³⁹

³⁹ Regarding the claim that Imam Abū Ḥanīfah disliked for one to make *tawassul* through the prophets and messengers—upon them be blessings and peace—Imam Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī said in his commentary on Imam al-Ghazālī's *Ihya'*:

Abū Ḥanīfah and his two companions disliked for a person to say, 'I ask You by the right (*ḥaqq*) of So-and-so, or by the right of Your prophets and messengers, or by the right of the Sacred House and the Sacred Precinct,' and the like; for [in their opinion] no one has any right over Allah ... As for what has been narrated about the words of the one supplicating, 'O Allah, I ask You by the right of those who ask [You] over You and by the right of my walking to You,' then what is meant by 'the right' here is [either] the inviolability (*ḥurmah*) or the right which He has promised out of His mercy; and Allah knows best.

Al-Zabīdī's words at the end of the passage—'what is meant by "the right (*ḥaqq*)" here is [either] the inviolability (*ḥurmah*) or the right which He has promised out of His mercy'—clarify what the Imam considered disliked. Thus, there is no offence if such words are used in the above context. Shaykh 'Abd-Allāh Sirāj al-Dīn says, 'As for the opinion of the Ḥanafis that it is disliked [for one to say] by the right of Your messengers, prophets and friends, or by the right of the [Sacred] House, because creation has no right over the Creator, then the dislike (*karābah*) applies to someone who imagines that a slave has a mandatory right upon Allah Most High, as is the innovation of the *Mu'tazilah*. If, however, what is intended by "the right" is the right which Allah Most High has obligated upon Himself out of His beneficence—as Allah Most High said: *To help believers is ever incumbent upon Us* [Qur'an 30:47], and similar examples, and which the aforementioned hadiths demonstrate—then there is no prohibition therein, as it is *tawassul* to Allah Most High by a right that Allah Most High has obligated upon Himself.' Sirāj al-Dīn, 'Abd-Allāh. *al-Ad'iyyah wa al-adhkār*, 276.

THE SIXTH PROOF

Al-Hākim narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and likewise Abū 'Awānah in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and al-Bazzār with a rigorously-authentic chain of transmission, that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'When a riding beast of yours escapes in a deserted land, then let him call out, "O slaves of Allah, capture [it]," for Allah has someone readily available (*hādīr*) that will capture it.' Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah mentioned this hadith in *al-Kalīm al-tayyib* on the authority of Abū 'Awānah, as did

This meaning is further elucidated by Ibn Hajar in *al-Jawhar al-munazzam*, who, when discussing the evidence for *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ before his creation, says:

That which proves *tawassul* through him ﷺ before his creation and that it is the practice of the righteous predecessors: the prophets, the friends of Allah and others—thus, the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah has no basis to its lie—is what has been narrated and authenticated by al-Hākim that he ﷺ said, 'When Ādam made his [sinless] slip, he said, "O my Lord, I ask you by the right (*ḥaqq*) of Muhammad ﷺ that You forgive me." Allah replied, "O Ādam, how did you know Muhammad when I have not yet created him?" He replied, "O my Lord, when You created me with Your hand [i.e. your power] and breathed into me of Your spirit [i.e. Your secret which You created and which You ennobled by annexing it to You with Your words *and I breathed in to him of My spirit* [Qur'an 15:29]], I raised my head and saw written on the legs of the throne: 'There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.' I then realised that You have not annexed to Your name except the most beloved of creation to You." Allah replied, "You have spoken the truth; he is the most beloved of creation to Me: if you ask Me by his right, I will forgive you. Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.'

What is meant by 'his right' is his degree and rank, or the right which Allah has conferred upon him over his creation, or the right which Allah has conferred upon him from Himself out of His grace; as in the authentic hadith: He [the companion who is asking the Prophet ﷺ] said, 'So what is the right of the slaves of Allah [over Him]?' [Narrated by al-Bukhārī (5967) and Muslim (30)]. [It is] not that which is compulsory (*wājib*) [upon Allah], as nothing is compulsory for Allah.' al-Haytamī, Aḥmad ibn Hajar. *al-Jawhar al-munazzam*. 1st edn. Beirut: Dār al-Hāwī, 1427/2007, 171–172.

Ibn al-Qayyim in his *al-Kalim al-tayyib*, al-Nawawī in *al-Adhkār*, Ḥāfiẓ al-Jazārī in *al-Ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn* and other countless hadith specialists; and this wording is from the narration of Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ, who ascribes it back to the Prophet ﷺ.

As for the words of this Najdī 'This is calling on someone [literally] present', then it is a manifest lie, because even though the slaves of Allah are present in relation to Allah's knowledge, from which nothing is absent, they are absent in relation to those who call on them. This, similarly, is the case with the prophets, the righteous and the occupants of the graves, as they are alive in their graves and their souls exist. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ ordered his nation to call on them and address them just as they address those who are present, even though they are absent from the eye. Nay, occasionally one may hear from them the return of greetings, recitation of the Qur'an and the call to prayer (azan) coming from inside their graves, as mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah in *Iqtidā' al-sirāt al-mustaḥṣin*. Therefore, calling on the Prophet ﷺ and addressing him is no less than [calling on and addressing] the slaves of Allah whom our Prophet ﷺ has ordered us to call on and to seek help from in returning one's riding beast. However, what he ﷺ intends is that they resort to means, for Allah has tied matters to their means, and the Prophet ﷺ is the best of means and causes, especially on the Day of Resurrection.

As for the Prophet ﷺ being present, in spite of his passing away, it has been legislated for us to address him and convey our greetings to him in prayer, through our words 'Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings'. Were it not for that [being effective], then this address and greeting of peace would be futile—yet this radiant Sacred Law is exonerated from being characterised with any futility. Thus, he ﷺ, according to both opinions, either hears the greetings of those conveying their greetings to him and knows them wherever they may be; or an angel is commissioned to stand at his grave ﷺ, conveying to him the greetings from his nation.

THE SEVENTH PROOF

Al-Tabarānī narrated, on the authority of 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān, that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'If one of you loses something whilst he is in a deserted land in which there is no one to accompany, let him say, "O slaves of Allah, assist me,"⁴⁰ for verily Allah has slaves whom he does not see.'⁴¹ It has also been narrated from Ibn Mas'ūd ﷺ without ascribing that to the Prophet ﷺ. Al-Nawawī ﷺ said, 'It has been tried and tested, and is authentic.' Ibn Muflīh mentioned from 'Abd-Allāh, the son of Imām Aḥmad, that he got lost on his way to hajj, so he called out, 'O slaves of Allah, show me the way,' and thus got on the right course.

Suppose that the slaves of Allah who are called on are [literally] present, as he claims, but because the one calling on them does not see them, then how is he guided onto the right path or attain his goal? Indeed, how is he guided by these mere words had they not been [only] the means, while Allah was the accomplisher? Likewise, the least degree of addressing the Prophet ﷺ is that it is similar to [addressing] the jinn and the men of the Unseen, despite him ﷺ being better and closer to Allah than them as a means to his Lord Most High.

THE EIGHTH PROOF

Al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Abī Shaybah narrate that Mālik al-Dār ﷺ, who was a treasurer for 'Umar ﷺ, said:

⁴⁰ There is a variant of the hadith in *Sharḥ al-Adhkar* that reads as, 'Al-Tabarānī narrated with a disconnected chain, on the authority of 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān, that the Prophet ﷺ said, "If one of you gets lost whilst he is in a land in which there is no human being, then let him say thrice, 'O slaves of Allah, assist me,' for verily Allah has slaves whom he does not see.'" Ibn 'Allān, Muḥammad. *Al-Futuhāt al-rabbāniyyah*. Beirut: Dār ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 5:151.

⁴¹ Ibn 'Allān says in *Sharḥ al-Adhkar*, 'In *al-Hirz* he said, "What is meant by them [i.e. the invisible slaves] is the angels, or Muslim jinn, or the invisible men (*rijāl al-ghayb*) called the *Abdāl* [the Substitutes].'" Ibid, 5:151.

When Medina was afflicted with a drought during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb ؓ, a man came to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ and complained to him, saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray for your nation to receive rain, for they are on the brink of destruction!' Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to him in his dream and said, 'Go to 'Umar and convey to him my greetings, and tell him that they shall be given rain.'

Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah mentioned this hadith in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, and the Najdī cited it from him in his epistle, affirming it, and he did not deny it. He said:

Regarding what has been narrated of a man coming to the Prophet's grave ﷺ and complaining to him about the drought in the Year of Ramādah,⁴² and that he ﷺ ordered him to go to 'Umar ؓ, then this is true, and things similar to this happen often to those less than the Prophet ﷺ [in rank]. Yet you should know that if these people who persistently plead were not answered, then their faith would be perturbed, as was the case of those who would plead to him in his lifetime.

It is clear that this plea, request and complaint to the Prophet ﷺ happened during the time of the Companions—the best of generations—so had that been prohibited, then the Companion, who is more knowledgeable about religion than all of the Muslim scholars, would not have done it. Furthermore, he was not condemned in spite of the presence of the noble Companions. It is therefore obvious, then, that the permissibility and recommendation of this matter was known to them, for otherwise it would have transmitted that at least one of them condemned it.

⁴² This was in the year 18 AH, during 'Umar's caliphate ؓ. It was called the Year of Ramādah (Drought, literally ashes), due to the extreme drought that turned the colour of most of the land of Hejaz into black-like ashes.

THE NINTH PROOF

Ibn 'Asākir mentions in his *Ta'rikh*, Ibn al-Jawzī in *Muthir al-gharām al-sākin*, and Imam Hibah Allāh in *Tawthiq 'urā al-imān* on the authority of al-'Utbā, the great Successor [of the Companions]:

A Bedouin came to the Prophet's grave ﷺ and said, 'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah.' In another narration that is mentioned by al-Ṭabarī, he said, 'O best of messengers, I have heard Allah say: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64], and I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, asking you to intercede for me with my Lord.' He then recited: 'O best of those who have been buried in the plain.'

Al-'Utbā said, 'As my eyes were overcome by sleep, I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my sleep, and he said, "O 'Utbā, catch up with the Bedouin and give him the good news of Allah having forgiven him.'"

All of the scholars of the nation have received this narration with acceptance, and the Imams of the four schools of Islamic law have approvingly mentioned it in the [chapter on] pilgrimage rites (*manāsik*), and it includes the Prophet being called on ﷺ in this world and asked for intercession. Citation of authoritative texts from the scholars, especially those of the Ḥanbalīs, on this report are to follow.

Ibn Taymiyyah, when mentioning this report, said:

A group of al-Shāfi'ī's companions, and likewise Ahmad, have recommended this, and they have substantiated [this position of theirs] with this anecdote, which does not establish a legal ruling; rather, the fulfilment of the Bedouin's need and its like have causes which have been expounded upon elsewhere.

Not everyone whose need is fulfilled due to a cause necessarily means that the cause is legitimate. A man may well do an action which he believes to be righteous, not knowing that it is prohibited, and is thus rewarded for his good intention and pardoned due to his lack of knowledge. Furthermore, the person who does the action may have an interpretation (*ta'wīl*), or be mistaken, or is a scholar of independent reasoning (*mujtahid*) or someone following one (*muqallid*), and is therefore forgiven for his error and rewarded for that which is legally good of his action that is admixed with the illegitimate, such as a *mujtahid* who errs. I have explained this in detail elsewhere.

He mentioned that in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* and in some of his *fatāwā*, and his pupil Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī mentioned it in *al-Ṣārim al-mankī fī al-radd 'alā al-Subkī*.

If we were to suppose that the author of the *Burdah* did not follow these rigorously-authentic hadiths and narrations which explicitly mention [the matter of] requesting from him ۞ in this world and the Next, and we were to adopt the opinion of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah in deeming it prohibited, or that it is not recommended—as mentioned by him in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*—then is it not true that Ibn Taymiyyah excused someone who has an interpretation [for his action], [and likewise] someone who errs, the *mujtahid* and one who follows a scholar, and said, 'He is forgiven and rewarded for his action?' So let us consider this man [the author of the *Burdah*] to be from this category of people. Then how is it lawful for someone who believes in Allah and the Last Day to declare a man, who is older than Ibn Taymiyyah, to be a disbeliever? In fact, al-Būṣīrī's students are from amongst Ibn Taymiyyah's shaykhs and contemporaries: the likes of Abū Ḥayyān al-Naḥwī, al-'Izz ibn Jamā'ah and others. So may Allah Most High disgrace ignorance; [look] where it delivers its person to!

THE TENTH PROOF

Al-Qustallānī in *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyyah* and al-Samhūdī in *al-Wafā* mention:

Abū Sa'īd al-Sam'ānī narrated from 'Alī—may Allah ennoble his face—that a Bedouin came to us three days after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was buried, and he threw himself over his grave, scattered soil over his head and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, you have said and we have heard your words, and you understood from Allah and thereafter we understood from yourself, and one of the things that was revealed to you is: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64]; and I have wronged myself and I have therefore come to you so that you may seek forgiveness for me.' He was thereupon called from the grave, 'You have been forgiven.'

I say: This report is corroborated by the abovementioned report which the Imams have accepted, including Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, even though he is stringent with regard to that, as you can see.

THE ELEVENTH PROOF

Qādī Iyād mentioned in the *Shifā*, with his authentic chain of transmission, that when Imam Mālik ibn Anas debated with Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, he said:

O leader of the believers, Allah has taught certain people correct etiquette and thus said: *Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet* [Qur'an 49:2], and He has praised a group of people and thus said: *Surely those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger* [Qur'an 49:3]. So his sanctity (*ḥurmah*) after passing away is the same as his sanctity when alive. Thereupon, Abū Ja'far became composed and said, 'O Abū 'Abd-Allāh, should I face the qiblah and supplicate, or face the Messenger of Allah ﷺ [and supplicate]?'

Mālik رحمته الله replied, 'Why turn your face away from him when he is your means and the means of your father Ādam?⁴³ Rather, face him and ask for his intercession, so that Allah may accept his intercession for you. Allah Most High said: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64].'

Al-Subkī cited this report in *Shifā' al-siqām*; al-Qusṭullānī, in *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyyah*; al-Samhūdī, in *al-Wafā* and *Khulāṣah al-wafā*; Ibn Hajar, in *al-Jawhar al-munazzam*, and others [also cited it].

THE TWELFTH PROOF

Ibn al-Jawzī mentioned in his book *al-Wafā fi fadā'il al-Mustafā* رحمته الله, with his chain of transmission back to Abū Bakr the specialist Qur'an reciter (*al-muqri'*), al-Ṭabarānī and Abū al-Shaykh, who all said:

We were in the Sacred Precinct (*ḥaram*) of the Messenger of Allah رحمته الله and afflicted by hunger; so we persevered that day. When it was time for supper, I came to the grave of the Prophet رحمته الله and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, hunger, hunger!' I then left. Abū Bakr said, 'Both Abū al-Shaykh and I slept whilst al-Ṭabarānī sat thinking about something, when an Alawite [a descendant of 'Alī] came to the door and knocked. We opened it for him, and lo and behold there were two servants, each carrying a basket filled with something. We then sat down and ate. He subsequently departed and left the remaining food with us. When we finished eating, the Alawite said, "O people, did you complain to the Messenger of Allah رحمته الله, for I saw him in a dream giving me the order to bring something to you?"'

⁴³ Imam Mālik is alluding to the hadith where Ādam رحمته الله asks Allah for forgiveness by *tawassul* through the Prophet رحمته الله, which suggests the hadith had a basis according to him, otherwise what would have been the point of mentioning Ādam in particular? See Appendix One for further details.

Taking Refuge in the Prophet ﷺ

This report was mentioned by a group of *muhaddiths*; and Taqī al-Dīn [ibn Taymiyyah] mentioned something similar to it in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*, where he said:

Then likewise what has been related about one of the people neighbouring Medina who came to the Prophet's grave ﷺ and desired a particular type of food, when one of the Hāshimīs came to him and said, 'The Prophet ﷺ has sent you that particular food, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is telling you to leave his presence and do not desire the like of that.'

There are others whose needs were fulfilled, and he did not say to them similar words, due to their independent scholarly reasoning (*ijtihād*), or their following [scholars] (*taqlīd*), or the lack of knowledge, as an ignorant person may be forgiven for something that another may not.

THE THIRTEENTH PROOF

Ibn al-Jawzī mentioned in his book *Ṣifāh al-ṣafwāh*, with his chain of transmission to Abū al-Khayr al-Tinānī, who said:

I entered the Messenger of Allah's city ﷺ whilst I was in a state of dire need. So I stayed there for five days without having anything to taste. I went over to the noble grave and greeted the Prophet ﷺ, Abū Bakr and 'Umar ﷺ and said, 'I am your guest tonight, O Messenger of Allah.' I then moved away and slept behind the minbar. In my sleep I saw the Prophet ﷺ with Abū Bakr on his right, 'Umar on his left and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib before him. Then 'Alī ﷺ shook me and said, 'Stand up, for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has arrived!' So I stood up and kissed him between his eyes. He then gave me a loaf of bread, so I ate some of it. When I woke up, lo and behold, [I found that] the other half was in my hand.

THE FOURTEENTH PROOF

Ibn Taymiyyah, in *al-Kalim al-tayyib*, and Hāfiz Ibn Abī Jamrah, in his *Sharh Mukhtasar al-Bukhārī*, mention on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbās—may Allah be well pleased with them—that the foot of one of them became numb and so he was told, ‘Mention the most beloved person to you,’ so he said, ‘O Muhammad,’ whereupon that numbness in his foot disappeared. Thus, this proves that calling on the most beloved person to one, even if it is not calling on the Messenger ﷺ, is permissible, and that it removes the ailment; so how about when it is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ [that one calls upon]?

If calling on an absent or a deceased person was forbidden, then these two grand Companions would have been more worthy of prohibiting that! It is for this reason that this report was mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim and others amongst the invocations [*adhkār*] whose performance is deemed to be [legally] *sunnah*.

Ibn al-‘Athīr mentioned in his *Ta’rikh*, in a self-admitted abridgment from the *Ta’rikh* of Ibn Jarīr al-Sunnī, that the slogan of the noble Companions ﷺ during war was ‘O Muhammad’ (*yā Muḥammadāh*). In addition, al-Wāqidī mentioned something similar to it in his book *Futūḥ al-Shām*.

Al-Suyūṭī mentioned in *Sharḥ al-sudūr*, on the authority of Ibn al-Jawzī with his chain of transmission to one of the Successors of the Companions, that when the disbelievers ordered them [the Successors] and tempted them to disbelieve, and they refused, they boiled for them oil in a pot and threw them in it, and so they called out ‘O Muhammad [*yā Muḥammadāh*].’

There is no doubt that calling upon him in these perilous situations is nothing but *tawassul* through him ﷺ and seeking his intercession ﷺ, for otherwise it would be meaningless to call on him.

In the biography of the Companion Sa‘īd ibn ‘Āmir ibn Hudhaym ﷺ [it is mentioned that] he said, ‘I witnessed the killing of Khubayb when Quraysh had dissected his flesh into pieces

and then carried him on a tree trunk. Then he called out, 'O Muhammad.' Thereafter, whenever I remembered that and my lack of support for of him whilst I was a pagan, I thought that Allah will never forgive me for that sin, and I will be forever afflicted by worry.' This then proves that calling on the Prophet ﷺ in times of hardship is a well-known matter, because Khubayb ؓ did the above in Mecca whilst the Prophet ﷺ was in Medina at the time; and Allah Most High knows best.

As for the words that emanated during his time ﷺ in which there is the suggestion that intercession is restricted to him—and examples of that are similar to the [following] words of al-Būṣīrī 'O noblest of creation, I have no one to take refuge in | Except you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls'—then they are far too many. Amongst them is what has been mentioned by al-Qusṭallānī in *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyyah* in the Chapter on the Drought Prayer (*bāb al-istisqā'*) on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik ؓ,⁴⁴ who said:

A Bedouin came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, we have come to you, and we do not have a child that sleeps nor a camel that makes noise.'⁴⁵ He then began to recite:

We have come to you, as the virgin's chest bleeds⁴⁶
Whilst the child's mother is preoccupied from tending
to the child
And we have no one to flee to except you
Where are people to flee to except to the messengers?

⁴⁴ Numerous hadiths have been narrated on this incident in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in the Chapter on the Drought Prayer (Book Seventeen).

⁴⁵ In other words, their children would not sleep due to extreme hunger; and they had no camels, for if they had camels, then they would have naturally made noise.

⁴⁶ This is a metaphorical expression for her menially wearing herself out and not finding anyone to serve her due to poverty.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ thereupon stood up, pulling his upper garment and raising his hands to the skies, and said, 'O Allah, quickly grant us rain that is a saviour [for us from this tribulation], productive, abundant, widespread, beneficial and not harmful.'

He ﷺ said, 'As soon as he ﷺ returned his hands to his neck, the skies cast their glistening clouds and the residents from the outskirts of Medina (*ahl al-baṭānah*) came screaming, "[We are] drowning! [We are] drowning!"'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then said, '[Send down the rain] around us, not upon us,' whereupon the clouds subsided from Medina until they surrounded it like a crown, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ laughed until his molars appeared. He then said, 'To Allah is attributed [the eloquence of] Abū Ṭālib; had he been alive, he would have been delighted [at this]. Who will recite his words?' So 'Alī ﷺ said, 'O Messenger of Allah, it is as though you are referring to his words:

[He is] a fair-skinned one, through whom the clouds are asked to rain

The sanctuary (*thimāl*) for the orphans, the protector (*īsmah*) of the destitute (*arāmil*)

Paupers on the verge of destruction from the kin of Hāshim encircle him

For they are blessed and graced with him

He ﷺ replied, 'Yes.' (Narrated by al-Bayhaqī.)

Al-Qusṭullānī ﷺ said, '*Thimāl*: sanctuary and assistance during adversity. '*īsmah* of the *arāmil*: guards the latter against ruin and need. *Arāmil*: destitute.'

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr narrates in *al-Istī'āb* in the biography of the Companion Sawād ibn Qārib ﷺ the words [of the latter] regarding the Messenger of Allah ﷺ 'Be an intercessor for me on the day when no one possessing intercession | Will be of any avail to

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Sawād ibn Qārib'. All of the biographers of the Prophet ﷺ have transmitted that as being from amongst his miracles ﷺ, because the jinn ordered Sawād to submit to him ﷺ, so he came to him and accepted Islam; thereupon, he recited some verses to the Prophet ﷺ, including:

I testify that there is no Lord other than Allah
And that you are relied upon for every Unseen matter
And that you are the closest of the messengers in means
To Allah, O son of the noblest and purest!

The Prophet ﷺ did not deny his request to intercede for him on the Resurrection Day and him making him a means, and that he is relied upon for every Unseen matter.

Ibn 'Asākir narrates from the chain of Abū al-Zubayr, who narrates from Jābir رضي الله عنه, that a woman from Quraysh clashed with Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah,⁴⁷ so she recited before the Prophet ﷺ:

O Prophet of guidance, to you is refuge
For Quraysh when there is no refuge

⁴⁷ Hāfiz Ibn Hajar mentions in *Fath al-Bārī* that on the Day of the Conquest of Mecca Sa'd, who was carrying the standard of the Anṣār, said to Abū Sufyān that it is a day of massacre. Thereafter, when Abū Sufyān came across the Prophet ﷺ, he said to him, 'Have you ordered for your tribesmen to be killed?' The Prophet ﷺ replied, 'No.' So he mentioned to him what Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah said, and then he beseeched him by virtue of his kinship. So he replied, 'O Abū Sufyān, today is the day of mercy; today Allah will honour Quraysh.' He then sent a messenger to Sa'd and took the standard from him and handed it over to his son Qays. Ibn 'Asākir has that Abū al-Zubayr, on the authority of Jābir, said that when Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah said the above, a woman from Quraysh stood in the way of Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said the above words. According to al-Wāqidī, the poetry that the woman recited was composed by Dirār ibn al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fihri, who, it seems, only sent the woman to gain greater sympathy. See *Fath al-Bārī* under the chapter Where did the Prophet ﷺ Establish the Standard on the Day of the Conquest.

When the vastness of the earth is constricted for them
 And the God of the heavens is at enmity with them
 Verily, Sa'd wants the back to break
 Of the people of Ḥajūn and al-Baḥā'

When he ﷺ heard this poetry, compassion and mercy entered his heart for them, and so he ordered for the war flag to be brought, which was then taken from Sa'd and given to his son Qays.

Moreover, al-Qusṭullānī mentioned in *al-Mawāhib* that the Prophet's ﷺ paternal aunt Ṣafīyyah ؓ expressed her commiserations for him [after he ﷺ passed away], amongst which were her words:

O Messenger of Allah, you were our hope
 You were kind and not harsh to us
 You were compassionate, and a guide and teacher
 Let whoever wants to cry, cry over you today

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned in his book *Kitāb al-kabā'ir* and a book regarding Sunnah and *bid'ah* [innovation] in the course of expounding on the innovation of Shiism (*rafḍ*):

Shaykh, Ḥāfiẓ al-Sīlafī, the resident of Alexandria, said with his chain of transmission to Yahyā ibn 'Aṭṭāf al-Mu'addal who related from a Damascene shaykh neighbouring Hejaz for many years:

I was in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah during a year of drought, when one day I left for the market to buy some flour for a *rubā'ī*.⁴⁸ The flour seller took the *rubā'ī* and said to me, 'Curse the Two Shaykhs [Abū Bakr and 'Umar ؓ] so that I sell you the flour.' I refused to

⁴⁸ Name of a currency.

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do so. Hence, he persisted several times, while laughing. Then I got annoyed with him and said, 'May Allah curse whomsoever curses them.' Thereupon, he slapped me in the eye and it fell onto my cheek. Thereafter, I went to one of my friends and told him what had happened. I then returned to the Mosque and went over to the [Prophet's] chamber and said, 'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. We have come to you, wronged, so retaliate for us.' Then we returned. When night descended, I fell asleep; and when I woke up, I found my eye to be as healthy as can be.

Ibn al-Qayyim ﷺ mentioned in these two books on the authority of Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-'Adīm in *Ta'rikh Halab*:

Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid related to me from a righteous shaykh known as 'Umar ibn al-Ra'īnī who said:

I was residing in the city of the Messenger ﷺ for a number of years, when one day I left home on the Day of 'Āshūrā' when the *Imāmiyyah* [Twelver Shia] would gather in the dome of al-'Abbās to read the narrative of the murder [of Imam Ḥusayn]. So [when I reached there] I stood at the door of the dome and said, 'I want something for the love of Abū Bakr.' Then one of them came out to me and said, 'Sit until I finish.' When he came out, he took me by the hand to his house, and there was me thinking that he will give me something; he then said, 'Enter.' As soon as I entered, he set two slaves on me, who tied me by the hands and beat me. He then ordered them to cut my tongue, and so they did. He subsequently said, 'Go to the one for whose sake you requested so that he may return your tongue to you!'

He said, 'He left him with his tongue cut, and then came to the Prophet's tomb ﷺ, seeking help from the

pain and began to say, "O Messenger of Allah, my tongue has been severed in love for your Companion! So if your Companion was right, then I want you to return my tongue to me." He spent the night asking for help in his heart. He said, "Then I fell into a light sleep." When he woke up, he found his tongue in his mouth as healthy as it could be, and that the *Rāfiḍī* who cut his tongue had turned into an ape. The next year, he went to that very place and found his son, who had accepted Islam: he, his wife and children had all repented from Shiism.'

In these two citations by Ibn al-Qayyim from [two of] the greatest hadith specialists, with their affirmation and his approval of them and the fact that he did not object to them, but instead mentioned them in the context of taking pride in seeking succour from the master of the messengers and that his intercession ﷺ is established. The citation of this scholar [Ibn al-Qayyim], whose stringency in these matters is well known, suffices, in addition to the fact that in these two citations there is the mention of him ﷺ being called on (*nidā'*) and asked, [and the resulting] tremendous, preternatural phenomena.

CHAPTER SIX

Scholarly Opinions Regarding the Legality of Calling on the Prophet (Nida') and Seeking His Intercession ﷺ

AS FOR THE SCHOLARLY opinions regarding the matter of calling on him ﷺ (*nida'*) and asking him to intercede on one's behalf, they are many and innumerable. However, we shall only mention a short selection from the opinions of the scholarly authorities of the four schools of Islamic law, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim and the rest of the Hanbali jurists.

THE HANBALI JURISTS

Let us first present the words of Ibn Taymiyyah, since the hearts of these people find more contentment with his opinions than they do with Qur'anic verses and authentic prophetic hadiths.

Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ was questioned about someone who asserts that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is not sought for help [with a consideration of the following]:

- ❖ Is this statement unlawful or not?
- ❖ Is it disbelief (*kufr*) whereby the one who says it becomes a disbeliever or not?
- ❖ If someone of this opinion substantiates it with verses from the Book of Allah and the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, does that proof benefit him or not?

- ❖ Thenceforth, if the evidence is established from the Book and the Sunnah, then what is necessary upon the one who opposes him in that when this is the case?

He replied in his *Fatāwā* with the following:

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. It has been established through the extensive Sunnah (*al-sunnah al-mustafidah*)—nay, mass-transmitted (*mutawātirah*) by agreement of the nation—that our Prophet, our master (*sayyidunā*) Muhammad ﷺ, is the intercessor and the one whose intercession is accepted, and that he shall intercede on behalf of creation on the Day of Resurrection; people shall be asking him for help and requesting him to intercede on their behalf with their Lord, and he shall intercede on their behalf. Furthermore, the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* unanimously agree that he shall intercede on behalf of the people who have committed enormities (*ahl al-kabā'ir*), for he will not allow anyone of the people of *tawhīd* to remain in the Hellfire forever.

As for the *Khawārij* and the *Mu'tazilah*, they have denied his intercession for the believers. These are misguided innovators, and it is a matter of dispute and elaboration [from the scholars] as to whether they are classed as disbelievers. As for someone who denies what has been established through mass-transmission (*tawātur*) and consensus (*ijmā'*), then he is a disbeliever after the proof is established against him, whether he calls this concept 'seeking help' (*istighāthah*) or not.

As for someone who affirms his intercession yet denies the Companions' *tawassul* through him and seeking his intercession, then it has been narrated by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik that, when people would be afflicted with drought, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ would pray for rain by virtue of al-'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, saying, 'O Allah, we used to make *tawassul* to You

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through our Prophet ﷺ and You would grant us rain; and we [now] make *tawassul* to You through our Prophet's uncle, so grant us rain,' and they would be granted rain."

* Someone might say: Had *tawassul* through the Messenger ﷺ after his passing away been permissible, then 'Umar ؓ would have made *tawassul* through him and not made *tawassul* through al-'Abbās ؓ. We say in response: Firstly, to leave the performance of something without being prohibited from that thing does not prove the impermissibility of that action; for how many matters there are that were not performed by some of the Companions in spite of the fact that they explicitly declared them to be permissible and approved of them when they were performed. For example, 'Umar ؓ himself approved of making *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ and did not condemn it. Al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated from Mālik al-Dār, who was 'Umar's treasurer ؓ, that he said:

People were afflicted with a drought during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ; so a man came to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ and complained to him, saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray for your nation to receive rain, for they are on the brink of destruction!' Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to him in his dream and said, 'Go to 'Umar and convey to him my greetings, and tell him that they will be given rain. Moreover, tell him, "You must observe wit ('*alayka bi l-kis*), you must observe wit.'" So the man came to 'Umar ؓ and informed him, whereupon 'Umar ؓ began to cry and say, 'O my Lord, I will do my best except that which I am incapable of.'

Hāfiẓ [Ibn Hajar] graded its chain of transmission to be rigorously authentic and said, 'Sayf narrated in *al-Futūḥ* that the person who he saw in the aforementioned dream is Bilāl ibn al-Hārith al-Muzanī, one of the Companions ؓ.'

Secondly, 'Umar's *tawassul* through al-'Abbās ؓ is not turning away from *tawassul* through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; rather it comprises *tawassul* through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, because he only made *tawassul* through al-'Abbās as he is the Prophet's uncle ؓ. He therefore makes *tawassul* through this kinship, as he explicitly said, 'and we make *tawassul* to You through Your Prophet's uncle ؓ,' and because the situation of the rain prayer demands supplication from the Imam so that the people may hear it and therefore attain reverence and brokenness, and humility and impoverishment to Allah Most High. Consequently, al-'Abbās took his place in supplication for him; so this action is the proof for the reality of *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ, since he said, 'We make *tawassul* to You through Your Prophet's uncle,' i.e. so

It is also mentioned in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* that a Bedouin said to the Prophet ﷺ, 'People are exhausted, children are hungry and property is in ruins; so we seek your intercession with Allah and we seek Allah's intercession with you.' Consequently, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ exclaimed Allah's glory, until that was known in his Companions' faces, and then he said, 'Woe to you! Verily, Allah is not sought for intercession for anyone of His creation: Allah's rank is greater than that.' So he, upon him be Allah's blessings and peace, rejected his words 'we seek Allah's intercession with you'; yet he did not reject his words 'we seek your intercession with Allah', but rather he affirmed it. Thus, its permissibility is known; so whoever denies that, then he is in error and an innovator, and there is dispute and elaboration [amongst the scholars] as to whether he is considered a disbeliever or not.

As for someone who affirms his intercession ﷺ, *tawassul* through him and the like, which have [all] been established by the Book, the Sunnah and consensus, yet opines that no one is supplicated to except Allah, and that those matters over which no one except Allah has the ability are not to be sought except from Allah, such as forgiveness for sins, guidance for the hearts, sending down the rain and bringing forth plantation, then this person is correct in that. In fact, Muslims have never disputed such a matter ... as narrated by

answer his supplication because of Your Prophet's virtue ﷺ, and because there is in it the upholding of the religious rite of the rain prayer and beseeching, supplicating, outcry and hope; and that is due to al-'Abbās's standing in supplication instead of 'Umar, may Allah be well pleased with them.

Thirdly, the Companions, by consensus from them, made *tawassul* through the relics of the Prophet ﷺ that are detached from him, such as his hair, nails and spittle—yet these have no soul! So how can it be said that 'Umar does not permit *tawassul* through him ﷺ after his passing away, notwithstanding he ﷺ is alive in his grave? This argument has been paraphrased from Sirāj al-Dīn, 'Abd-Allāh. *al-Ad'īyah wa al-adbākār*, 285-288.

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al-Ṭabarānī, in *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, that there was a Hypocrite in the time of the Prophet ﷺ who used to cause harm to the believers, so Abū Bakr ؓ said, 'Stand up and let us seek help from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ against this Hypocrite.' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied, 'Help is not sought from me; help is only sought from Allah.'

The Prophet ﷺ only intended the second meaning, which is that someone asks him something that only Allah has power over. Indeed, the Companions would ask him to supplicate for them; and they would pray for rain through him [in their supplication], as mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar ؓ, who said, 'Occasionally, when I looked at the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I would remember the words of the poet praying for rain; and as soon as it would descend, the spouts would surge for his sake:

[He is] a fair skinned one, through whom the clouds are asked to rain

The sanctuary for the orphans, the protector of the destitute,

which are in fact the words of Abū Ṭālib.⁵⁰

Consequently, those scholars who have authored works on the names of Allah Most High have said, 'It is necessary for every legally responsible person to know that there is no succour (*ghiyāth*) and saviour (*mughīth*) in the absolute sense other than Allah, and that every help is from Him; and even if it happens to occur at the hands of another, the reality

⁵⁰ The reason behind Abū Ṭālib composing this verse, in the course of an ode praising the Prophet ﷺ, was that Quraysh were afflicted with a drought and so Abū Ṭālib supplicated for them to be given rain and he made *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ, whereafter the cloud poured down with rain. That was before the Prophet ﷺ was sent as a messenger. al-Nabahānī, Yūsuf. *Shawāhid al-ḥaqq*. Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1408/1988, 165.

is that it is His, Glorified and Most High, and from others only in the figurative sense' ... Seeking help (*istighāthah*) with the meaning of asking from the Messenger ﷺ that which is befitting him is something no Muslim disputes; whoever disputes this meaning is either a disbeliever—if he denies that which entails disbelief—or someone who has erred and is misguided.

As for whoever affirms for anyone besides Allah something that is exclusive to Allah, then he is also a disbeliever if the proof is established against him that entails his disbelief ... Whoever opposes what has been established by the Book and the Sunnah is either a disbeliever or a sinner, unless he is a believer who is a *mujtahid* that has erred [in judgment], in which case he is rewarded for his *ijtihad* and forgiven his mistake; and it is similarly the case if the knowledge of the proof which is established by the Book and Sunnah has not reached him.

So take a look at this fatwa, for it is immensely beneficial and an incredible gift. How much deterrence and prohibition to these deviants is contained therein! Firstly, his argument that it has been established by the mass-transmitted Sunnah that our Prophet ﷺ is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted, and that people shall ask for his help and request him to intercede on their behalf with their Lord, and that those who deny his intercession ﷺ are the *Khawārij* and the *Rāfidah*, then these are precisely the [sentiments underpinning the] words of the author of the *Burdah* 'O noblest of creation, I have no one to take refuge in | Except you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls'. Here he intends to inform [us] that no one shall intercede on that day and there is no one whom people will resort to for intercession on their behalf except him ﷺ, due to his words 'Your status, O Messenger of Allah, will not decrease on my account | When the Generous shall manifest Himself with the name Avenger'.

Secondly, even if we were to concede that it is a request and plea, he [Ibn Taymiyyah]—may Allah have mercy on him—has said,

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'Seeking help (*istighāthah*) with the meaning of asking from the Prophet ﷺ that which is befitting him is something no Muslim disputes; and whoever disputes this meaning is either a disbeliever or someone who has erred and is misguided.' There is no doubt that the requesting of the author of the *Burdah* and others is that of [seeking] his intercession, and this is befitting of him, for he [Ibn Taymiyyah] said that he ﷺ is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted, as proven through mass-transmitted hadiths. Furthermore, the intention here is not to seek forgiveness for one's sins from him ﷺ, for example, as this is exclusive to Allah Most High; rather, his intent in seeking his intercession is his supplication (*du'ā'*) ﷻ and intercession with Allah, so that the sins of the one seeking his intercession are forgiven; nay, even the Muslim laymen do not intend otherwise, let alone the scholars!

Thirdly, [ponder] his words:

Consequently, those scholars who have authored works on the names of Allah Most High have said, 'It is necessary for every legally responsible person to know that there is no succour (*ghiyāth*) and saviour (*mughith*) in the absolute sense other than Allah, and that every help is from Him; and even if it happens to occur at the hands of another, the reality is that it is His, Glorified and Most High, and from others only in the figurative sense.'

This is the criterion between a monotheist and a pagan with regard to everything, and with everyone, whether alive or dead, as you see in the words of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah 'What is forbidden is to seek that which no one besides Allah has power over, such as forgiveness for sins, guidance of hearts and bringing forth plantation', meaning in the absolute sense. As for his words ﷺ to Abū Bakr 'Help is not to be sought from me; help is only to be sought from Allah', then it is to be understood in light of this [explanation]; in other words: I am not sought for help with regards to those matters which only Allah has power over—namely, the aforementioned, and not intercession, as it is within his ﷻ and

others' capacity; and intercession does not behove Allah Most High's rank, as he ﷺ said that Allah is too majestic to intercede on behalf of anyone.

Fourthly, his words at the end of the fatwa 'Whoever opposes what has been established by the Book and the Sunnah is either a disbeliever or a sinner, unless he is a believer who is a mistaken *mujtahid* that has erred [in judgment], in which case he is rewarded for his *ijtihad* and forgiven his mistake; and it is the case if the knowledge of the proof which is established by the Book and Sunnah' refute those who unconditionally accuse Muslims of disbelief, such as these *Khawārij* who do not excuse the *mujtahid* who errs [in their estimation], nor the ignorant person who does not know. Yet Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn [ibn Taymiyyah] said, 'This person [the *mujtahid*] is rewarded for his *ijtihad* and forgiven his mistake.'

The Shaykh has another fatwa and a reply which is more detailed than this, though it conveys the same meaning, so refer to it if you want in its appropriate place.

Furthermore, the Shaykh [Ibn Taymiyyah] said in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*:

As for what has been narrated about a man who came to the Prophet's grave ﷺ and complained to him about the drought in the Year of Ramādah, after which he saw him (ﷺ in a dream) ordering him to go to 'Umar ؓ and command him to lead the people in performing the rain prayer, then such things often occur to those who are less than the Prophet ﷺ [in rank], and I know of such incidents. Similarly, it frequently occurs that people ask the Prophet ﷺ or someone else from his [the Prophet's] nation for some need and it is subsequently fulfilled. However, you should know that the Prophet ﷺ or anyone else from his nation answering these people who request does not prove that it is recommended to ask [in such a manner]. Moreover, due to the fact that most of these people who persistently ask

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[in this way] are in such dire straits, their faith would be shaken if they were not answered, as was the case of those who would ask him during his lifetime ❀.

The above mentioned words of his therefore demonstrate that, according to him, it is not recommended for people to ask for their needs from the Prophet ❀ and others. Yet others deem such a practice to be recommended. Although no one, based on the words of the Shaykh, has said that a person who does something that is not recommended is a disbeliever or a sinner. This is demonstrated by his words 'their faith would be shaken if they were not answered'; thus, he affirmed for them faith, and did not negate that from them.

In fact, the Shaykh has many other passages that are similar in meaning to those in *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* [that have been quoted thus far]. Nevertheless, this Najdī has distorted these texts and misquoted them in his discussion. Therefore, return to this book [*Iqtidā' al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*] and look and compare between our citation and his so you can distinguish his knowledge from his ignorance.

[Let us now turn to] Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah al-Ḥanbalī ❀, who is the shaykh [of the shaykhs] of Ibn Taymiyyah, such that he said regarding him, as transmitted by Ibn Rajab and Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī in *al-Shadharāt*, 'No one has entered Shām after al-Awzā'ī with more knowledge of Islamic law than Shaykh Muwaffaq.' Ḥāfiẓ al-Diyā' al-Maqdisī ❀ said, 'I saw Imam Aḥmad ❀ in a dream, and he said, "Your companion al-Muwaffaq has not been remiss in [his] commentary on *al-Khiraqī*."⁵¹ Moreover, 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām ❀ said, 'I have not seen in Islam the like of *al-Mughnī* by al-Muwaffaq in terms of its quality and the research found therein.'

⁵¹ *Mukhtasar al-Khiraqī* by Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim 'Umar, widely known as al-Khiraqī (d. 334 AH).

He [Muwaffaq] ؓ narrates in his book *al-Mughnī*,⁵² the commentary on *al-Khiraqī*, that al-'Utbā ؓ said:

I was sitting at the Prophet's grave ؓ when a Bedouin came and said, 'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah. I have heard Allah say: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64]; so I have come to you seeking forgiveness for my sin, and asking you to intercede (*mustashfi'an*) for me with my Lord.' Then he began to recite:

O best of those whose body⁵³ has been buried in the earth

And through whose scent both the low and highlands became pleasant

My soul is ransom for a grave in which you reside

Wherein is integrity, and in which there is benevolence and generosity

The Bedouin then departed and I was overcome by sleep. I then saw the Prophet ؓ [in my dream], who said to me, 'O 'Utbā, catch up with the Bedouin and give him the good news of Allah having forgiven him.'

[Muwaffaq said:] Therefore, it is recommended for anyone entering the [Prophet's] Mosque to begin [by entering] with his right foot... 'O Allah, indeed You have said and Your words are the truth: *If, when they had wronged themselves* [Qur'an 4:64], and I have come

⁵² The following titles in this section are all authoritative Hanbali law manuals by their leading jurists: *al-Mughnī*, *al-Khiraqī*, *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr*, *al-Muqni'*, *al-Mustaw'ib*, *Mughnī dhawī al-afḥām*, *al-Ri'āyah al-kubrā*, *al-Furū'*, *Sharḥ al-Iqnā'*, *Mansak* and *Hāshiyah al-Zād*.

⁵³ The wording is '*a'ẓam*', which literally means bones, but what is intended here is the noble body.

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to you, seeking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord.'

'*Mustashfi'an*' [means] 'seeking intercession from him', because the letter *sīn* is used to denote request, so his addressing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and requesting [his] intercession is a proof that it is recommended.

Shams al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah al-Hanbalī mentioned this narration from al-'Utbā in *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr*—which is the commentary on *al-Muqni'*—at the end of the [Book on] Hajj, in the Chapter on Visiting the Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, he stated that the visitor should address the Prophet ﷺ and seek his intercession ❁.

This *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr* is in approximately fifteen volumes; and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb cites from it in his *Mukhtaṣar* in fiqh. Moreover, he [Shams al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah al-Hanbalī] is also one of the shaykhs of the shaykhs of Ibn Taymiyyah. Al-Dhahabī said—as mentioned by Ibn al-'Imād in *al-Shadharāt*—'I have seen in the handwriting of our shaykh, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, the following [about Shams al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah]:

The master (*sayyid*) of the people of Islam in his time—the *qutb* [axis] of the orbit of days in his era, the truly unique one in his time, the truly unparalleled one of the age, the one in whom the various virtues and lofty qualities gathered, the one free from all flaws and bad traits, such that a bigot would struggle to find in him a fault rendering him to be inadequate—has passed away.

Ibn Muflih, in *Sharḥ al-Muqni'*, said:

He [the author of *al-Muqni'*] said that it is permissible in the [Hanbalī] *madhhab* to seek intercession with Allah through a pious man; and it has been said that it is recommended. Ahmad said in his *Mansak*—which was written by al-Marwazī—'One is to make *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ

in one's supplication,' and he definitively confirmed the matter in *al-Mustaw'ib* and others.

The narration of al-'Utbā and the same verse [of the Qur'an] are also mentioned in *al-Mustaw'ib*,⁵⁴ with a repetition of what is in *al-Mughnī* and *al-Sharḥ al-kabīr*, but containing a further addition: 'O Allah, I turn to You through Your Prophet ﷺ, the Prophet of Mercy. O Messenger of Allah, I turn through you to my Lord so that He may forgive my sins. O Allah, I ask You by his right that You forgive my sins.'

Moreover, that which was mentioned by Imam Aḥmad in his *Mansak* by al-Marwazī is the same as what is narrated from him in *al-Mubdi'* and definitively confirmed in *al-Mustaw'ib*. The aforementioned wording is the wording from *al-Mustaw'ib*.

Furthermore, in *Mughnī dhawī al-aṣḥām* by Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, who is one of the students of [the students of] Ibn Taymiyyah, [it says], 'Tawassul through the righteous, whether they are alive or dead, is permissible,' and he placed over it a stamp of approval from the four schools of Islamic law.

In [the work] *al-Ri'āyah al-kubrā* by Ibn Ḥamdān, in the Chapter of the Rain Prayer, [it says], 'Tawassul through the righteous, the scholars and others through whom prayers are likely to be accepted is permissible. I [Ibn Ḥamdān] say: Even if they are distant or nearby and have not come out with the people.'

Ibn Muflīḥ said in *al-Furū'*:

- . Tawassul through the Prophet ﷺ in one's supplication is permissible; and the author [of *al-Mustaw'ib*] definitively confirmed it in *al-Mustaw'ib* and other works, and our shaykh considered it akin to the matter of swearing an oath through him ﷺ.

⁵⁴ By Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sāmurrī, better known as Ibn Sanaynah (535-616 AH). Ibn Badrān described him as a *mujtahid fī al-madhhab*.

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Tawassul through faith in him ❁ and obedience and love for him, and through his supplication and intercession and the like, such as one's actions or actions of [Allah's] servants that are enjoined with regard to him [the Prophet], is legitimate; and it is the means of approach that has been enjoined in his Most High's words: *Be mindful of Allah and seek a means of approach to Him* [Qur'an 5:35].

There is no doubt that the author of the *Burdah* was making *tawassul* through his intercession ❁ with his words 'O noblest of creation, I have no one to refuge in | Except you when the all-encompassing catastrophe befalls', which is the intercession on the Day of Resurrection; hence he said [immediately] after it: 'Your status, O Messenger of Allah, will not decrease on my account | When the Generous shall manifest Himself with the name Avenger.'

As for the manner of *tawassul* which Imam Ahmad wrote to al-Marwazī—may Allah Most High have mercy on them both—and which he definitively confirmed in *al-Mustaw'ib*, then it is what we have previously mentioned, and there is no other formula mentioned in *al-Mustaw'ib*; and the wording is 'O Messenger of Allah, I turn through you to my Lord so that He may forgive me'.

Moreover, in the work *al-Ghuniyah*, it is narrated from our master Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlī⁴⁵ al-Hanbalī in the Chapter of Visiting [the Prophet ❁], 'O Allah, I turn to You through Your Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy. O Messenger of Allah, I turn through you to my Lord so that He may forgive my sins. O Allah, I ask You by his right that You forgive me.'

Then there is Shaykh Yahyā al-Ṣarṣarī, who mentioned in his poetry *istighāthah* from the Messenger of Allah ❁, and he is one of the contemporaries of Majd al-Dīn, the grandfather of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah. Taqī al-Dīn praised him [al-Ṣarṣarī] in

⁴⁵ More commonly known as Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī or Jīlānī.

his book *al-Intiṣār*, by remarking, 'The righteous jurist (*faqīh*) and the composer of well-known poems.' He [al-Ṣarṣarī] mentioned something in praise of Imam Aḥmad rah in his poetry, in the ode on creed that ends with the letter *lām*, which culminates with 'I am not fearful of any calamitous affair | When you [the Prophet] are a guardian for me in all calamities'. This was after addressing him with his words:

Surely, you are the strongest means of approach to the All-Merciful
Through it is my *tawassul* in all circumstances
Ask the Lord of the Worlds on my behalf to grant me death
On the clear everlasting Sunnah

Furthermore, he said in another ode:

O Messenger of Allah, you are my means of approach
To Allah, when my strategy in what I seek is at the end of its tether
.
You are my support in misfortunes that continually
Befall me, one after another, and my treasure in times of poverty and need

Then, he said in another [poem]:

O my master, O Messenger of Allah, O my support
In every difficult and painful calamity
O the one, when someone sought, who is fearful, flees to
From the catastrophes of time, he escapes harm
So ask Allah to forgive me, O the one who when adversity
Befalls me, through him I am saved from torment
Accept the plea of a slave who relies on you in
Repelling weighty calamities from himself, taking refuge

He said in another, 'I seek by virtue of it your pleasure, so hasten | In mending [the heart of] Yahyā ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥanbalī'; and [elsewhere] he said, 'Through you, I seek refuge, I seek help and I have hope | That I, through your status, in the Afterlife may succeed.'

His entire collection of poetry (*diwān*) is similar to this and his collection was well known in all of the regions of the world before the time of Ibn Taymiyyah up until today, without anyone objecting to him. On the contrary, Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah praised him with his words 'The righteous jurist and the composer of well-known poems'. If calling on the Prophet ❁, asking from him and seeking his intercession had been polytheism and disbelief, then he would have spoken up against him and condemned him; and he would have cautioned people against his poetry, and would have criticised it and [cautioned against] quoting and reading it. Since none of the scholars from his time up to today spoke against him, it proves that these matters were not considered major polytheism; nay, they are not even the lesser polytheism, because the lesser polytheism—even though it does not expel one from the religion—is nevertheless prohibited or offensive, and rescinds one's integrity.

In fact, the scholars have praised al-Ṣarṣarī ❁ for his poetry, amongst them Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Rajab in *al-Ṭabaqāt*, 'Abd al-Hayy ibn al-'Imād al-Shāmī al-Ḥanbalī in *Shadharāt al-dhahab* and other historians. Ibn Rajab said in *al-Ṭabaqāt*, regarding his biography, 'His collection of poems (*diwān*) and eulogies are popular; and he was the Ḥassān of his time. He read the Quran according to its various narrations and studied with the scholars of hadith.'⁵⁶

In *Sharḥ al-Iqnā'*, and others, in the Chapter on Hajj, as [mentioned] in *al-Sharḥ al-kabir* and *al-Mughnī*, there is mention of seeking intercession from him ❁ and *tawassul* through him.

⁵⁶ There was a passage here, 'When matters become difficult for you, then seek assistance from the people of the graves,' which seemed out of place and may have been an error from the copyist; it has therefore been omitted.

Ibn 'Asākir al-Baṭā'ihī ۞ remarked [about al-Ṣarṣarī]:

He heard hadiths from Ibn Idrīs al-Ya'qūbī, the ascetic and companion of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir [al-Jilānī], who was given licence (*ijāzah*) from Shaykh 'Abd al-Mughīth al-Ḥarbī and others. He memorised fiqh and linguistics, and he would sparkle with intelligence. It was said that his eulogies of the Prophet ۞ reach twenty volumes. He was a righteous man, an exemplar, a frequent reciter [of the Qur'an], striving [in worship], extremely patient and content. He loved the way of the *fuqarā'*, and he would attend the *samā'* with them and give dispensation therein. He was rigorous in his adherence to the Sunnah, shunning those who would oppose it, and his poetry is filled with that (the principles of the Sunnah). He saw the Prophet ۞ in a dream, who gave him the glad tidings of him dying whilst adhering to the Sunnah. Consequently, he composed a long well-known ode on the matter. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dimyāṭī heard [hadiths] from him and related them from him; and, in addition, he mentioned him in his *Mu'jam* [biographical dictionary].

Shaykh Shabīb ibn Ḥamdān—the brother of the author of *al-Ri'āyatayn*,⁵⁷ the Ḥanbalī from Ḥarrān, who was the paternal cousin of Majd al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah—composed a magnificent ode in imitation of *Bānat Su'ād*,⁵⁸ whereby he addresses the Prophet ۞: 'So intercede on behalf of the one who composed this, O the

⁵⁷ The author of the Two *Ri'āyahs*: *al-Ri'āyah al-ṣuḡhrā* [The smaller *ri'āyah*] and *al-Ri'āyah al-kubrā* [The greater *ri'āyah*] by Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān (603–695 AH).

⁵⁸ *Bānat Su'ād* is the renowned ode by the poet Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, who came to Medina after the Conquest of Mecca, having repented and seeking redemption from the Prophet ۞—he had vilified the Prophet in his poetry whilst a pagan—by means of this famous ode which he recited before the Prophet ۞. The poem begins with verse: 'Su'ād [name of a woman] has parted, so my heart today is love-sick | Lost after her, unable to ransom [itself], shackled.'

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one whose intercession | Unfetter the one bridled and shackled.'
Now his death is in the year 695 AH. Included within the ode—as
mentioned by Ibn al-'Imād al-Ḥanbalī in *al-Shadharāt*, citing from
the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Rajab—is:

[This] glory [of the Prophet], the intellect has failed to fully
comprehend it

And [his glory] has rejected the intellect of mankind, which
is restrained

May good betide Ṭaybah; rather, may good betide every
young man

Who kisses the perfume of its moist earth

In addition, the *Mansak* of Shaykh Sulaymān ibn 'Alī mentions
the matter of seeking intercession from the Prophet ❁ in a similar
manner to what is in *al-Mughnī*, the commentary on *al-Khiraqī*, and
al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr. Furthermore, [it is mentioned] in the *Hāshiyah al-*
Zād by 'Uṭaylī al-Ḥanbalī: 'Tawassul through the prophets, friends
of Allah and the righteous is permissible;' and he mentioned the
hadith, 'When matters become difficult for you, then you should
visit graves.'

These authoritative texts are found in the books that I merely
have in my possession, in spite of my lack of expertise and
conversance, and I have left much of what is in them out of fear
of boredom and reproach. Yet whomsoever Allah Most High does
not benefit will not profit by everyone advising him. These are the
authoritative texts of Ibn Taymiyyah and the Ḥanbalīs; nay, [they
reflect] the authoritative text of Imam Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] ❁
in his *Mansak* [written] by al-Marwazī. So their earlier and later
[Ḥanbalī] scholars have all agreed [on the permissibility of] calling
on him, addressing him and seeking intercession from him ❁;
accordingly, how is it then valid for one to say, 'This is disbelief
and polytheism?' Is not such a stance sheer ignorance and slander
against authoritative texts of the notable scholars?

THE HANAFI JURISTS

As for the authoritative texts from the Hanafi Imams, then they have discussed [the matter at hand] in the chapter on visiting [the Prophet ﷺ] and elsewhere, and I do not know of any dispute amongst them on the issue.

The author of *al-Mukhtār li al-fatwā*⁵⁹ and its commentary—who is from amongst the early Hanafis—says at the end of the [Book of] Hajj in the Chapter on Visiting [the Prophet ﷺ]:

One says, ‘O Messenger of Allah, we are your guests and visitors to your grave. We have come from remote lands and far-off regions, intending to fulfil your right, to look at your historic feats, to gain blessings from visiting you and to ask you to intercede with our Lord, for our sins have weighed down our backs, and you are the intercessor whose intercession is accepted, who is promised with intercession and the praiseworthy station. Allah Most High said: *If, when they had wronged themselves...* [Qur’an 4:64], and we have come to you, having wronged ourselves, asking forgiveness for our sins; so intercede on our behalf with our Lord and ask Him to let us die whilst adhering to your Sunnah. Intercede, O Messenger of Allah! Intercede, O Messenger of Allah!’

The Hanafi scholars have unanimously agreed upon the likes of this extract.

Shaykh ‘Alī al-Qārī رحمه الله said in his book on the subject of visiting the Prophet ﷺ:

One makes *tawassul* through him ﷺ for oneself, and seeks his intercession with his Lord. The scholars from the

⁵⁹ *Al-Mukhtār li al-fatwā* by ‘Allāmah ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Mawdūd al-Mawsili (d. 683 AH) is one of the five relied-upon primary texts (*mutān*) in the Hanafi school of law. Its author also wrote a commentary on it which he entitled *al-Ikhtiyār li ta‘lil al-mukhtār*.

various schools of thought [who wrote] on the rites of the hajj have said that one of the best formulas for one to say is that which has been narrated from al-'Utbā, i.e. the abovementioned narration of the Bedouin who came to the Prophet's grave ❀.

One should profusely seek forgiveness and implore him ❀ to seek forgiveness for one, saying, 'We are your guests and visitors of your grave, O Messenger of Allah. We have come to fulfil your right and to gain blessings by visiting you and to seek your intercession for that which has weighed down our backs and darkened our hearts, as we have no intercessor other than you to hope for, nor do we hope to seek other than your door; so ask forgiveness [for us] and intercede with your Lord on our behalf, O intercessor for the sinners; and ask Him to place us amongst His righteous servants.'

Al-Ṭarābulsī ❀ mentioned [the like] in his work on the rites of hajj, and the author of *al-Durr* cited it from him in [the Chapter on] Hajj, as well as the aforementioned extract from *Sharḥ al-Mukhtār*. The same is found in the *Manāsik* of al-Karmānī al-Ḥanafī,⁶⁰ and in the *Manāsik* of al-Fārisī, citing from Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī.

Shaykh Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī ❀ said in *al-Fatāwā al-Khayriyyah*, 'As for their words "[Give us] something for the sake of Allah, O 'Abd al-Qādir", then this is calling upon (*nida'*); and when anything is ascribed to Allah, then what necessitates its prohibition?' In addition, he vigorously refuted those who reject this statement.

In his epistle *Nafahāt al-qurb wa al-ittiṣāl*, Sayyid Aḥmad al-Ḥamawī al-Ḥanafī, the annotator of *al-Ashbāh*, said:

⁶⁰ That is Abū Maṣṣūr al-Karmānī al-Ḥanafī, the author of *al-Masālik fī al-manāsik*.

As for after their death, then their disposal (*tasarruf*) is only by the permission of Allah Most High and His will,⁶¹ who has no partner in creating and bringing into existence. Allah honoured them with it [this *tasarruf*] and allowed it to occur at their hands and because of them as preternatural phenomena: sometimes through inspiration, sometimes through their supplication, sometimes through their action and choice, sometimes without their choice, and sometimes by *tawassul* through them to Allah Most High, during their lifetime and after their death, of those matters that are within the realm of possibility for the Divine power.

When people call upon them, before and after their death, they do not intend thereby to ascribe to them the act of creating, bringing into existence and independently performing actions, as this is something no Muslim intends; and such a thing does not occur to the mind of any of the general populace (*'awāmm*), let alone others. Therefore, to suggest that these words comprise such a [deviant] meaning and to prohibit it is an act of deception in religion and a cause for confusion amongst the general populace who believe in the Oneness of Allah. How can someone charge another with the accusation of disbelief for believing in the

■ 'The Qutb al-Haddād also said, "When the righteous die, only their physical entities and forms are absent; as for their realities, then they are present, for they are alive in their graves. If a friend of Allah is alive in his grave, then nothing of his knowledge, intelligence and spiritual power is absent; rather, their souls, after death, increase in foresight, knowledge, spiritual life and their devotion to Allah Most High. Then, when their souls turn towards to Allah Most High regarding anything, He, Glorified and Most High, fulfils it and brings it about in honour of them; and this is the meaning of the statement of some of them, 'They possess disposal (*tasarruf*).' So the real disposal—which is causation, creating and bringing into existence—belongs solely to Allah Most High who has no partner. A friend of Allah, or anyone else, causes no effect in anything whatsoever, whether he is alive or dead; so whoever believes that a friend of Allah or anyone else causes effect to anything, then he is a disbeliever of Allah Most High.'" al-Nabahānī, Yūsuf. *Shawāhid al-ḥaqq*, 150.

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existence of disposal for them, during their lifetime and after their death, when the [notion] returns to Allah Most High's power, in terms of creating and bringing into existence? How [can such an understanding be possible] when the books of the Muslim masses (*jumhūr al-muslimin*) are filled with it and that it is undoubtedly permissible and factual, such that it is nearly classified under those matters necessarily known (*darūriyyāt*); nay, those matters that are manifestly obvious (*badīhiyyāt*)?

This is the case because all of the miracles of this nation in their lifetime and after their death, whether it is disposal or other [matters of this sort], are from amongst the miracles of the Prophet ❀ that prove his prophethood and the universality of his message that endures after his death ❀—its continuation never ceasing, nor is it revived by the revival of miracles (*karāmāt*) in every age until the Day of Resurrection [because it is perpetual].

Al-Barmāwī ❀ cited in *al-Dalā'il al-wāḍiḥāt fī ithbāt al-karāmāt fī al-ḥayāh wa ba'd al-mamāt*.

Amongst the scholars who have categorically affirmed them [i.e. the miracles after their death] is Shaykh al-Islam Ibn al-Shihnah al-Hanafī, Shaykh 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Maqdisī in *al-Suyūf al-ṣiqāl* and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Hanafī; and their wording is similar to the wording of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Hanafī, though they added, 'No one denies them except someone who is forsaken and who holds a corrupt estimation of the friends of Allah.'

This, as you see, is with regard to the friends of Allah, so what about the master of the prophets ❀ and the Imam of the friends of Allah; hence, seeking intercession from him and *tawassul* through him ❀ is permissible.

Shaykh Ḥasan al-Shurunbulālī al-Hanafī, in *Imdād al-Fattāh sharḥ Nūr al-idāh*, during the discussion on visiting [the Prophet ❀],

mentioned the same as what the author of *al-Ikhtiyār* and Shaykh 'Alī al-Qārī in the aforementioned citation have transmitted about asking from him ﷺ and *tawassul* through him and seeking his intercession; so there is no need to repeat the extract, as a gesture is sufficient for a noble man.

THE SHĀFI'Ī JURISTS

As for the Shāfi'ī Imams, then [we have the likes of] Imam al-Nawawī رحمه الله, who said in *al-Adhkār*, *al-Manāsik* and *Sharḥ al-Muhaddḥab* during the discussion on visiting the Prophet ﷺ:

Then one returns to stand in front of the Prophet's face ﷺ and turns to him to request for oneself and asks him ﷺ to intercede with his Lord, Glorified and Most High. One of the best formulas for one to say is what has been mentioned with approval by our companions [the Shāfi'ī scholars] from al-'Utbā: 'I was sitting at the Prophet's grave ﷺ when a Bedouin came and said [to the Prophet], "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah; I have heard Allah say: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you* [Qur'an 4:64]; so I have come to you seeking forgiveness for my sins, seeking your intercession with my Lord."

Al-Bayhaqī رحمه الله said in *Shu'ab al-īmān*:

The King only draws near to Himself one who He considers capable of observing the correct etiquette in His presence, and they are His devote worshippers ('*abbād*) who have been brought nigh to Him—genuine, pure, ascetic, altruistic, honoured and purified. Whilst we, the poor and destitute, look under their feet with the eye of impoverishment and need, holding onto the ends of their hems, ardently pleading for their intercession, [hoping] that maybe their compassionate hearts will look towards us because of their compassion and mercy, so that our Master [Allah Most High] sees us in their hearts; for they are the places

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He looks at from amongst creation, and thereby shows us mercy through one of their fragrant breezes and benefits us through their love.

This, as you see, is regarding the generality of Allah's pious devote worshippers, so what about the intercession of the messengers, especially their unequivocal master and the unanimously [established] pride of the prophets?

'Allāmah al-Mujtahid Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī responded to a question that was posed to him regarding someone who says in eulogy of the Prophet ❁, 'So intercede on behalf of the one who composed this, O the one whose intercession | Unfetter the one bridled and shackled,' and someone objected to it because [he claimed that] asking the Prophet ❁ has not been transmitted. He ❁ said in response:

Allah, Allah, there is no strategy or power except through Allah, the Most High, the Exalted. We seek refuge in Allah from tribulations: both apparent and hidden. This objector has committed abominations disguised as words of advice, and they have hence become a means of disgracing him. He is mistaken and incorrect, and he and his like have been frequently afflicted ... He has displayed abhorrent ignorance with his words. As for asking the Prophet ❁ himself, then how can we not ask him when he is our means of approach and the means of approach of our father Ādam ❁ to our Lord from before? 'Ukāshah and other Companions ❁ asked him as established in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

The Imam, the *mujtahid*, Shaykh al-Islam Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī said, as mentioned by him in *Shifā' al-siqām*, and as cited by al-Munāwī and others in *Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-saghir*.

Tawassul through the Prophet ❁ and seeking his help and intercession with his Lord are recommended, and no one from the early Muslims (*salaf*) and the latter ones (*khalaf*)

denied that until Ibn Taymiyyah appeared and denied it and strayed from the straight path, innovating something that no scholar before him has ever opined; thus, he became one of mankind's disfigured people.

He [al-Subkī] also said, 'Tawassul through righteous people is permissible, and the opinion that this is exclusive to the Prophet ﷺ is an opinion without proof.'

'Allāmah al-Qusṭullānī ؒ, the commentator of *al-Bukhārī*, said in his book *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyyah*:

Seeking help, intercession and *tawassul* through him ﷺ are permissible. Thus, it is befitting that Allah will accept one who seeks such an intercession. There is no difference in one using the expression of *istighāthah* [seeking help], *tawassul*, *tashaffu* ' [asking him to intercede] or *tawajjuh* [asking Allah through his prominence (*wajāhah*)], as all of these things are realised from him ﷺ before his creation and after it, during his life and after his passing away, during the period of the *barzakh*, after Resurrection and on the plains of the Resurrection, as mentioned by the author of *Tahqīq al-nuṣrah* and *Miṣbāḥ al-zalām*.⁶²

He then mentioned the proofs for that.

Moreover, he said in this book whilst discussing his miracles ﷺ:

As for the second category, which is what occurred after his passing away, then these are profuse, since at every moment preternatural phenomena occur for the elite of his nation, because of him, proving the immensity of his noble rank, which is counted as from [the category of] seeking help

⁶² The full title of the book is *Tahqīq al-nuṣrah fī talkihī dār al-bijrah* by Imam Abū Bakr al-Marāghī (d. 816 AH).

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from him, and other matters that shall be mentioned in the final section during the discussion on visiting his noble, radiant grave ❀.

He also said during the discussion on visiting [the Prophet ❀], after mentioning the evidences for the recommendation (*husn*) of *tawassul* through him ❀ and asking his intercession:

You, O seeker, must attain felicity and reach your hope for a goodly state in the World of the Unseen and Seen by holding on to the helms of his compassion and generosity, begging from the tables of his blessings, [making] *tawassul* through his honourable status and seeking intercession by means of his lofty rank; for he is the means of approach to attaining lofty aspirations and seizing one's goal and the one who is the sanctuary on the day of panic and alarm for all the noble messengers. Place him before you in whatever calamities befall you and [have him as] your Imam in whatever acts of virtue and spiritual ranks you endeavour to achieve, for you shall attain your utmost goal and the pleasure of the One whose knowledge encompasses everything.

He also said a little before these words: 'As for *tawassul* through him ❀ on the plains of the Day of Resurrection, then it is of those matters over which consensus has been established and narrations have been mass-transmitted in the hadith of the intercession.'

Hāfiz Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī said in his book [on the merits of Aqsa Mosque] *al-Mustaḥṣā fī fadā'il al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*, during the discussion on visiting the Intimate Friend [of Allah, i.e. Ibrāhīm ❀], 'The one visiting [him] says, "O Prophet of Allah, I turn to my Lord through you so that my needs may be fulfilled." Then he turns to Allah Most High through [the mediation of] all of His prophets, especially the master of the first and the last, our master Muhammad ❀.'

'Allāmah al-Samhūdī said in *Khulāṣah al-wafā'*:

Since *tawassul* through one's actions is permissible, as is authentically established in the hadith of the cave,⁶³ even though they [one's actions] are created, then asking [Allah] by him [the Prophet ﷺ] is a fortiori. Moreover, there is no difference in using the expression of *tawassul*, or *istighāthah*, or *tashaffi'* or *tawajjuh* through him ﷺ for one's need. This may mean asking him to supplicate [for one], as was the case [when he was] in the world, since it [asking him to supplicate for one] is not impossible, considering he is aware ﷺ of the request of the one asking.

He then mentioned the hadith regarding the Year of Ramādah and others.

In the aforementioned book, he said in the section on visiting [the Prophet ﷺ]:

Then one says, 'O Messenger of Allah, Allah has said in what He has revealed to you: *If, only when they had wronged themselves, they come to you* [Qur'an 4:64], and I have arrived to you as a visitor, and through you I seek refuge, requesting you to intercede on my behalf with my Lord, for you are the intercessor for the sinners, the notable one (*wajih*) who is accepted with the Lord of the Worlds. Here I am, acknowledging my sin, making *tawassul* through you to my Lord. I seek your intercession with Him so that He may have mercy on His slave, even though he has offended, and that He pardons [him of] what he has reaped [of sins], and protects him in what remains of his life in this world by your blessings and intercession, O Seal of the Prophets and the Intercessor for the Sinners.

⁶³ This is in reference to the hadith narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim of three men who became trapped in a cave, when they sought shelter in it and a great rock from the mountain fell over the entrance, thereby blocking it. Each one of them supplicated to Allah by virtue of the most hopeful righteous deed that they had performed. Consequently, Allah answered their prayer and the rock moved, thus allowing the entrance to be opened.

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You are the intercessor, and [to whom] my hopes are attached

I have hoped in you, O gracious one, to intercede on my behalf

This is your guest, who is left without any sanctuary
Other than your eminence, O my petition and my hope.'

'Allāmah Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī said in his book *al-Jawhar al-munazzam fi ziyārah al-qabr al-mu'azzam*:

In summary, the use of the word '*istighāthah*' for the attainment of help, even if it is by way of recourse to means and acquisition (*kasb*), is undoubtedly a well-known matter, linguistically and legally speaking; and there is no differentiation between it and [the expression of] requesting (*su'āl*), especially in light of what has been narrated in the hadith in *al-Bukhārī* about the intercession on the Day of Resurrection: 'Whilst they are in that state, they shall seek help from Ādam for help, followed by Mūsā, and then Muhammad ❖.'

Tawassul through him maybe in terms of requesting supplication (*du'ā'*) from him, since he ❖ is alive, aware of those asking him. It is authentically established in a long hadith that people were afflicted with drought during the time of 'Umar ❖, when a man came to the Prophet's grave ❖ and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray for your nation to receive rain, for they are on the brink of destruction.'

He also mentioned something similar to it in both *Hāshiyah al-idāh* and *Manāsik*.

Al-Shihāb al-Ramlī said, 'Seeking help (*istighāthah*) from the prophets and messengers, the friends of Allah and the righteous is permissible. Moreover, the prophets and messengers, the scholars and the righteous grant help after their death, because the miracles

of the prophets and the friends of Allah do not cease with their death.'

Al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī and al-Ramlī Junior said in *al-Manāsik*—as cited by al-Nawawī ۞ in what has been previously mentioned of asking intercession from him ۞ and *tawassul* through him—that it is considered a recommended act.

Al-Shawbarī, the annotator of *Sharḥ al-Minhāj*, said in reply to a question that was raised to him: 'Tawassul to Allah Most High and seeking help from the prophets, messengers, scholars and the righteous after their death is permissible, because the miracle of the prophets and the friends of Allah does not cease with their death. As for the prophets, then that is because they are alive in their graves, praying and performing pilgrimage, as narrated in prophetic narrations.'⁶⁴

Al-Munāwī ۞ said in his *Manāsik* [on the rites of hajj] according to the four schools, 'One makes *tawassul* through the Chosen One ۞ for one's self, and let one seek his intercession with his Lord.'

THE MĀLIKĪ JURISTS

As for the Mālikī jurists, then Qāḍi Iyāḍ has narrated in *al-Shifā'* on the authority of the Imam of the Land of Migration [Imam Mālik] ۞ that he said to Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr, when he asked him about facing the qiblah during supplication, 'Why turn your face away from him when he is your means and the means of your father Adam before you? Rather, face him and ask him to intercede, so that Allah accepts his intercession for you.'

In his book *al-Madkhal*, Ibn al-Ḥājj al-Mālikī said:

As for the great ranks of the prophets and the messengers—may Allah's blessings and peace be upon them all—then the

⁶⁴ As in the hadith about the Night Journey from Mecca to the Aqsa Mosque, where the Prophet ۞ led all the previous prophets—upon them be blessings and peace—in prayer. See footnote 36.

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one visiting them comes to them and makes *tawassul* to Allah Most High for the fulfilment of one's needs and forgiveness of one's sins. Moreover, one seeks help and asks for one's needs from them, and has certainty in one's prayers being answered through their blessings and has a strong, good opinion with regards to that and that they are the open door to Allah.

Allah's custom (*sunnah*) has been for the needs [of people] to be fulfilled at their hands and because of them. Now whoever is unable to reach them, then let him convey his greetings to them via a messenger, and mention what he needs and [request] forgiveness for his sins, concealment of his flaws and so forth, as they are the noble masters, and nobles do not refuse anyone who asks them, nor anyone who makes *tawassul* through them, nor anyone who takes refuge in them.

This is in regard to visiting the rest of the prophets and the messengers; as for visiting our Prophet ❀, the master of the first and the last, then it [being a means of one's needs being fulfilled] exceeds that by many degrees, because he is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted and not rejected. Furthermore, anyone who seeks him, or descends in his court yard, or seeks his assistance or help is not disappointed, as has been practically demonstrated and established through reports (*āthār*).

He then mentioned the hadith in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, 'Verily, my similitude and your similitude is only like the similitude of moths that fall in the fire, while I am taking you [away] by your belts,' as a proof for the recommendation of *tawassul* through him and seeking help from him (*istighāthah*), because the proof is general and not specific to a particular time, just as it is not specific to a particular person.

'Allāmah Abū 'Abd-Allāh ibn al-Nu'mān al-Mālikī ❀ said in his book *Miṣbāḥ al-ḥalām fī al-mustaghīṭīn bi khayr al-anām*, '*Istighāthah*, *tawassul*, *tashaffi'* and *tawajjuh* [to Allah] through the Prophet ❀ happens in all states: before his creation and after,

during his lifetime and after his death, in the intermediate realm (*barzakh* [between death and resurrection]) and on the plains of the Resurrection.' He then mentioned numerous examples; and it is a valuable book, which I saw [compiled] in twenty fascicles.

Abū Dāwūd al-Mālikī mentioned, in his book *al-Bayān wa al-intisār*, many examples of adversity befalling scholars and righteous people, whereupon they took refuge in the Prophet ﷺ and were thereby relieved by the permission of Allah Most High.

The *muhaddith* Ibn Abī Jamrah al-Mālikī, the abridger of *al-Bukhārī* and its commentator, said:

When I entered the mosque of Medina, I did not sit down except for prayer, and I remained standing there until the caravan departed. Neither did I leave for al-Baqī' [the graveyard] nor anywhere else for that matter, and I did not behold anyone other than him ﷺ. When it crossed my mind to leave for al-Baqī', I said [to myself], 'Where shall I go? This is Allah's door that is open for the seekers, the needy, the broken, the desperate, the poor and the destitute, and there is none like him from whom one can resort to'—referring to the Prophet ﷺ.

'Allāmah al-Fishī al-Mālikī ﷺ said in *Sharḥ al-'Izzīyyah*, citing from Shaykh Khalīl—the author of the famous *al-Mukhtaṣar* in the school of Mālik ﷺ—in his work on the rites of hajj, on the authority of al-Qābisī, Abū Bakr ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān and others:

One comes to the grave [of the Prophet ﷺ] characterised by much abasement, composure, brokenness, impoverishment, need, desperation and reverence, with the sense that one is standing before him ﷺ, as there is no difference between his life and death. It has been narrated that his nation's actions are presented to him, morning and evening, and so he knows them by their signs and works. Moreover, let one make *tawassul* through him ﷺ and ask Allah by virtue of his status, since he is the place where the mountains of wrongdoings and the burdens of sins are offloaded. Due to the blessing

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of his intercession, and its magnitude with his Lord, no sin is too big for it; and whoever believes otherwise is deprived, whose inner sight Allah has effaced and whose heart He has misguided. Has he not seen His Most High's words: *If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Forgiving, Merciful* [Qur'an 4:64]?

CONCLUSION

We have cited from the Imams of the four schools, who are the reliance of the adherents of each school, and others are similar to them. If we had wanted to cite everything that has been mentioned [on the matter], we would be restricted for time and the pages would be exhausted. These, then, are the jurists of the schools and the transmitters of the religion, and it is from them that people have taken the opinions of their Imams of the various schools of thought

Al-Dhahabī said about his shaykh, Ibn Taymiyyah, in the abridgement of *Minhāj al-i'tidāl*, 'It is possible for all of the experts of the various sciences to err, except the jurists and the hadith specialists, as it is not possible for them to agree on an erroneous matter; and it is not possible for them to accept a lie as truth, nor to reject something true.'

These *Khawārij* have made it their capital to criticise the transmitters of the religion, and to harbour a bad opinion of them and discontentment with their opinions that conflict with their own whims. So if, according to you, they are satisfactory, O objector, then so be it, otherwise you are merely claiming a rank that is not conceded for you up until you die, whereupon it will be said to you, 'Where did you gain this knowledge of yours?' If it is from Allah and His Messenger—and I do not think these [scholars] deviated from it, or that you have been fortunate to be granted it, or that they were ignorant of it while you had the knowledge—then we have mentioned to you above the Qur'anic verses, hadiths and narrations that refute you, since they suffice as evidence against you and as a manifest proof for the Muhammadan nation.

This is notwithstanding their consensus. If you claim that the consensus is in your favour, then present a single proof and a single opinion from someone who opposed what we have mentioned from these Imams. If you argue that Ibn Taymiyyah opposed the consensus, then our response to you is that it has been mentioned above that Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah did not dispute the matter of seeking his intercession ☞; rather, he said in his legal edict: 'As for seeking help from the Prophet ☞ [in a way] that is befitting his rank, then whoever denies this is either a disbeliever or a deviant.' He has concluded that intercession is from his rank; so seeking it and other matters which the creation has the ability over is permissible. He only prohibited [asking for] that which no one but Allah has the ability over, such as forgiveness for sins, sending down the rain and bringing forth plantation; and regarding this, despite it being something that no Muslim intends, the Shaykh [Ibn Taymiyyah] has said that whoever intends it is excused if he is a *mujtahid*, someone who follows a *mujtahid* (*muqallid*), an ignorant person or someone who has an element of doubt and the like, which the Shaykh has restricted in all of his books.

Even if we were to suppose that Ibn Taymiyyah holds the same opinion as you and that it is polytheism (*shirk*) which expels one from the religion—in spite of the fact he, by Allah, never said this—people are not obliged to adopt his opinion and abandon the position of all of the scholars from the ummah, the verses [from the Qur'an], the explicit rigorously-authentic hadiths and the opinions of the early Muslim community (*salaf*). Indeed, he and his pupil Ibn al-Qayyim have said, 'Whoever obligates people to adhere to a particular school of thought or the opinion of a single scholar and leave all others is to be asked to repent—either he repents or he is killed.'

He [Ibn Taymiyyah] said in *al-Furqān*:

People are of three types in this regard: [firstly,] those who if they believe a particular person to be a friend of Allah, they agree with him in everything he thinks his heart informs

him from his Lord, and he submits to him in everything that he does. [Secondly,] those who if they see him saying or doing something contravening the Sacred Law, they expel him from Allah's friendship altogether, even if he happens to be a *mujtabid* who has merely made a mistake. If a person opposes the opinion of some of the jurists and agrees with the opinion of others, then it is not the right of anyone to oblige him to adopt the opposing opinion and claim that he has opposed the Sacred Law.

This, then, is the state of affairs; and Allah Most High is the One to whom complaints are raised about an age in which the opinion of the likes of this Bedouin—who cannot differentiate non-declension (*binā'*) from declension (*i'rāb*), and does not distinguish between the husk and the kernel—is promoted amongst people. What is worse is that he claims to have attained the level of *ijtihad* [independent scholarly reasoning]. Yet he has not mastered the words of the Book of Allah, let alone its meanings; and he has not yet understood the expressions of the pre-eminent jurists, nor has he been acquainted with the opinions of the glorious Imams. Rather, his affair is one of rigidly adhering to the words of one of his predecessors who was inebriated by the perception of his ignorance and his choicest wine, and so his words according to him are like the revelation in the Book, and his speech is the appreciated speech. Thereafter, he happened to find riff-raff followers who obey the likes of this somnolent person, so that each believes that what he says conforms to the truth, even though you will find that his words, if you were to truly understand them, are like the gibberish of someone suffering from fever, and his followers are no different; hence [it is how] Shann found compatibility with Ṭabaqah.⁶⁵

It is not surprising that this ignoramus accused the author of the *Burdah* of disbelief, as he has accused the noble Companions

⁶⁵ A famous Arab parable where Shann, an astute Arab, who upon searching for an intellectually compatible wife ends up finding a similarly astute woman named Ṭabaqah.

of disbelief because of their statement 'Designate for us Dhāt Anwāt.'⁶⁶ He thereby judged them to have committed apostasy. He, however, excused them on the basis that whoever utters a word of disbelief but who then is notified and realises [his error], then this realisation is a barrier against his disbelief. Thus, the excuse is greater than the sin, just as someone who washes faeces with urine. We take refuge in You, O Allah, from this chronic disease, and beg You [to protect us] from [following] the path of these ignorant riff-raff.

O Allah, grant us Your love, the love of those who love You, and the love of an act that brings us closer to Your love. Do not leave us to our own devices, even for a glance of an eye, nor less than it, O the best of those who answer. Have mercy on us by the means of Your greatest beloved and Your most august Messenger ﷺ. Make us amongst those who follow his Sunnah and who act upon his way. Furthermore, drive away those who detract from his rank with their nonsense, rendering their deeds null and void by diminishing his noble rank with their whisperings. So do not allow, O Allah, for a clan to arise for them, and cause them failure, in this world and the Afterlife, if they do not desist from that.

⁶⁶ The author is referring to the hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2271):

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went out to Hunayn, he passed by a tree that belonged to the pagans that was called Dhāt Anwāt, on which they would hang their swords. They [the Companions] said, 'O Messenger of Allah, designate for us a Dhāt Anwāt just as they have Dhāt Anwāt,' to which the Prophet replied, 'Glory be to Allah! This is the same as what Mūsā's people said to him: "Make a god for us, like the gods they have." By the One in whose hand is my soul, you shall follow the way (*sunnah*) of those before you.' This is an acceptable-rigorously-authentic hadith.

Al-Nawawī [commenting on another hadith that contains the words 'you shall follow the ways (*sunan*) of those before you (i.e. the Jews and Christians)'] said, 'What is meant [i.e. by the words 'you shall follow the way'] is conformity in acts of disobedience and contraventions, not in disbelief (*kufr*); and this is a manifest miracle of the Prophet ﷺ, as that which he foretold occurred

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Thus, the last remnant of the wrongdoers was cut off—all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds!⁶⁷ May Allah bless our master Muhammad, the one true to his promise, the trustworthy, and his family and noble, blessed Companions; and [may He] seal our lives with a good ending. *Āmin. Āmin. Āmin.*

accordingly,' al-Nawawī, Yahyā ibn Sharaf. *Sharḥ al-Nawawī 'alā Muslim*. 6th edn. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī (offset of al-Būlāq), 1305/1887, 10:102.

⁶⁷ Quran 6:45.

APPENDIX ONE

On Creation only Being Brought into Existence for the Prophet's Sake

THE FOLLOWING CITATION of scholarly quotes is intended to further validate the author's defence of Imam al-Būṣīrī's words:

فَإِنَّ مِنْ جُودِكَ الدُّنْيَا وَضَرْمَتَهَا

Verily, this world and its counterpart [i.e. the Afterlife] are from your generosity

Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, in his commentary on the *Burdah* entitled *Mashāriq al-anwār al-muḍīyyah*, said:

(Verily ... from your generosity) which Allah generously gave you is (this world and its counterpart), which is the Afterlife, meaning the last of the two [lives]. From his goodness in this world is his guiding mankind; and from his goodness in the Afterlife is his intercession on their behalf.⁶⁸

Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī, in his commentary on the *Burdah* entitled *al-Zubdah fī sharḥ al-Burdah*, said:

⁶⁸ al-Anṣārī, Zakariyyā. *Mashāriq al-anwār al-muḍīyyah*, manuscript. Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī, in his commentary on the *Burdah* entitled *al-'Umdah fī sharḥ al-Burdah*, said something similar; see *al-'Umdah fī sharḥ al-Burdah*. 1st edn. Dubai: Dār al-Faqīh, 1424/2003, 663.

Appendix One

The meaning is: your status shall not diminish on account of your generosity to anyone of your nation, because from your generosity and kindness to all of creation is the best in this world by guiding, and the best in the Afterlife by intercession. It has been said: The meaning of the two worlds being from his generosity is that he is the channel (*wasīṭah*) for the pouring of existence upon the essences and the flow of generosity upon everything that exists;⁶⁹ and there is in it an allusion to the hadith, 'Were it not for you, I would not have created the orbits (*aflāk*).'⁷⁰

Badr al-Dīn Zarkashī, in his *Ḥāshiyah al-Burdah*, said:

As for [his words] (Verily, this world ... is from your generosity), then that is because it has been established that when he was given it, he refused it,⁷¹ and he was the most generous of people in expending it. Ibn Fāris mentioned in his book [on the names of the Prophet ﷺ entitled] *al-Munbi fi asmā' al-Nabi* ﷺ: On the Day of Hunayn a woman came to him reciting poetry in which she reminded him of the days

⁶⁹ This is similar to what Imam al-Shāfi'ī said in his introduction to his *Risālah*: 'There is no manifest or hidden blessing (*ni'mah*) that we have received, by which we have attained some good in the religion or the world, or some misfortune that has been averted in them both or in one of them, except Muhammad ﷺ is its cause (*sabab*): the one leading to its goodness, steering to its guidance, driving away from destruction.' al-Shāfi'ī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs. *al-Risālah*. 1st edn. Cairo: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1357/1938, 17.

⁷⁰ 'Alī al-Qārī, al-Mullā. *al-Zubdah fi sharḥ al-Burdah*, manuscript.

⁷¹ As in the hadith of Abū Umāmah narrated by al-Tirmidhī: The Prophet ﷺ said, 'My Lord offered to turn the rocks of Mecca into gold for me, but I said, "No, my Lord. I would rather be satiated one day and go hungry the next: so when I am hungry, I humbly beseech and remember You; and when I am satiated, I thank and praise You."'

Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said, 'As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Jibrīl were on mount Ṣafā one day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O Jibrīl, by the One who sent you with the truth, the family of Muhammad do not have a fistful of flour or a handful of barley tonight." As soon as he said that, he heard a loud noise come from the sky that terrified him, thereupon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Has Allah ordered the Resurrection to be established?"

he was suckled amongst the [tribe of] Hawāzin, whereupon he returned to them what he took, and he gave them in abundance. Moreover, what he gave them on that day was valued and it reached 500 million. Ibn Dihyah said, 'This is the pinnacle of generosity which has never been heard of amongst creation.'... As for [his generosity in] the Afterlife, then he possesses the Station of Praise (*Maqām al-Ḥamd*), for which the first and the last will praise him, and it will be said to him, 'Intercede! Your intercession will be accepted; and ask, you shall be given.'⁷²

Commenting on another verse of the *Burdah*—'How could poverty tempt him to worldliness | when but for him the world would not have been brought from the void'—Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī says:

(How could poverty tempt him to worldliness | when but for him the world would not have been brought from the void): The world would not have been brought from the void to existence—it is impossible for the world to not have been brought out of the void into existence because he exists ☉; rather, it came into existence because of his existence. This is derived from the hadith:

When Ādam made his [sinless] slip,⁷³ and he had seen written on the legs of the Throne 'There is no god except Allah [and] Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah', he

He replied, "No, but He has ordered Isrāfīl [to come to you], so he descended to you when he heard what you said." So Isrāfīl came to him and said, "Allah Most High has heard what you have mentioned and has therefore sent me to you with the keys to the treasures of the earth; and He has ordered me to offer you that if you want me to turn the mountains of Tihāmah into emeralds, rubies, gold and silver, I will do so. So if you wish, [you can be] a king prophet; and if you wish, [you can be] a slave prophet." Jibrīl then [after he ☉ consulted him] gestured to him to be humble, so he said thrice, "I would rather be a slave prophet." Al-Ṭabarānī narrated it with an authentic chain of transmission. al-Nabahānī, Yūsuf. *Wasā'il al-wuṣūl*. 2nd edn. Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 1425/2004, 149–150.

⁷² Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn. *Ḥāshiyah al-Burdah*, manuscript.

⁷³ See footnote 22.

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asked by the right of our lord Muhammad ﷺ that He forgive him. Thereupon, He Glorified and Most High said, 'If you ask Me by his right, I will forgive you. Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.'

Ādam is the father of mankind, and Allah created for him and his progeny the earth and whatever is therein, and He has made the night and day, the sun, the moon and all else subservient to them.⁷⁴

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HADITH OF ĀDAM'S TAWASSUL ﷺ THROUGH THE PROPHET ﷺ

Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī, after mentioning that the hadith is narrated by al-Ḥākim in his *al-Mustadrak*, says in *Mafāhim yajib an tuṣahḥah*:

Al-Ḥākim narrated it with his chain of transmission in *al-Mustadrak* and graded it as rigorously authentic; and it was narrated by Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī in *al-Khaṣā'is al-Nabawiyyah*, and he graded it as rigorously authentic; and it was narrated by al-Bayhaqī in *Dalā'il al-nubuwwah*—and he does not narrate forgeries, as he explicitly mentions in his introduction to his book; it was also graded as rigorously authentic by al-Qusṭallānī and al-Zurqānī in *al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyyah* [and its commentary] and by al-Subkī in *Shifā' al-siqām*. Ḥāfiẓ al-Haythamī said, 'Al-Ṭabarānī narrated it in *al-Awsaṭ*, and there is in it [i.e. a narrator] that I do not know.'

It has come from another chain that is on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās with the wording 'Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Ādam, Paradise, or the Fire'. Al-Ḥākim narrated it in *al-Mustadrak* and said, '[It is] rigorously authentic in its chain of transmission.' Moreover, it was graded as rigorously authentic by Shaykh al-Islam al-Bulqīnī

⁷⁴ al-Haythamī, Ibn Hajar. *al-'Umdah fi sharḥ al-Burḍah*, 220.

in his *Fatāwā*;⁷⁵ Shaykh Ibn al-Jawzī mentioned it in *al-Wafā* at the beginning of his book; and it was cited by Ibn Kathīr in *al-Bidāyah*.

Some scholars have voiced opposition and thus criticised the grading of the hadith: rejecting it and judging it to be a forgery, such as al-Dhahabī and others; while others judged it to be weak and others [considered it] to be extremely weak (*munkar*). Consequently, they have not unanimously agreed on a single judgement; therefore, the issue revolves around investigating it, in terms of affirmation or negation, acceptance or rejection or suspending [one's judgement] based on their difference over the grading of the hadith. This is in terms of the chain of transmission and the establishment of the hadith; as for its meaning, then let us leave the matter for Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah to tell us. Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned two hadiths on this subject matter and related them as a corroborative testimony; he said:

Abū al-Faraj al-Jawzī narrated with his chain of transmission to Maysarah, who said, 'I said, "O Messenger of Allah! When were you a prophet?" He replied, "When Allah created the earth and turned towards [creating the heavens and fashioned them as seven heavens; and [when] He created the Throne, He wrote on the leg of the Throne 'Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets.' Allah created Paradise in which He allowed Ādam and Hawwā' to live; and then He wrote my name on the gates, leaves, domes and pavilions, while Ādam was between soul and body. Then, when Allah Most High gave him life, he looked at the Throne and saw my name; so Allah informed him that 'He is the master of your progeny.' Then, when Satan deceived them, they repented and sought intercession with Him through my name.'"

⁷⁵ His legal edict is mentioned below.

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Abū Nu‘aym the *hāfiẓ* narrated, in the book *Dalā‘il al-nubuwwah*, [a narration cited by] Shaykh Abū al-Faraj ...⁷⁶

When Ādam made his [sinless] slip, he raised his head and said, ‘O my Lord! By the right of Muhammad, [I plead to You] that You forgive me.’ Then it was revealed to him: ‘What is Muhammad? Who is Muhammad?’ He replied, ‘O my Lord! When You completed my creation, I raised my head towards Your Throne and, lo and behold, there was written on it: “There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.” Then I realised that he is the noblest of Your creation to You, since You joined his name to Your name.’ He said, ‘Yes, I have forgiven you. Also, he is the last of the prophets from your offspring; and were it not for him, I would not have created you.’

So this hadith corroborates the one before it and they are like an explication to the rigorously authentic hadiths (*Fatāwā*).

I [al-Mālikī] say: This therefore proves that the hadith according to Ibn Taymiyyah is valid (*ṣāliḥ*) and can be used for corroboration and due consideration (*i‘tibār*), because a forgery or a false narration cannot be cited as a corroborative report according to the *muhaddiths*; yet here you see the Shaykh citing it as a corroborative report for explication ...

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah spoke valuably and excellently on the matter, thereby demonstrating intelligence, foresight and great balance. Even though he negated the existence of the hadith from the Prophet ﷺ concerning this [particular]

⁷⁶ The ellipsis indicates where the extensive chain included by Ibn Taymiyyah has been omitted.

meaning (in accordance with his knowledge at that time), he subsequently retracted and defended the meaning and interpreted it with a logical interpretation and established the validity of the statement; hence, clearly refuting those who claim that it is *shirk* or *kuf*r, or claim that the meaning is invalid and false, or claim that there is in it a disparagement of the rank of divine oneness (*tawhīd*) and transcendence...

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah said in his *Majmū' al-fatāwā*:

Muhammad is the master of Ādam's progeny, the best of creation and the noblest in Allah's sight. Consequently, some have said: 'Allah created the world because of him' or 'Were it not for him, He would have neither created the Throne, the Stool, heaven, earth, sun or moon.' However, this is not a hadith from the Prophet ﷺ: neither rigorously authentic nor weak, and not one of the scholars of hadith has transmitted it from the Prophet ﷺ; nay, it is not even known from the Companions, but it is merely the words of someone unknown! Yet it is, nevertheless, possible to interpret it in a valid manner, such as His Most High's words: *He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth* [Qur'an 45:13]; and *He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. He has made subservient to you the sun and the moon, pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day. He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them* [Qur'an 14:32-34], and similar verses which clarify that He created all of creation for the progeny of Ādam, and it is known that Allah has therein other tremendous wisdom and greater than that. [...]

So if it is said, 'He did such-and-such for such-and-such [a reason],' then it does not necessarily mean that there is no other wisdom therein. Similarly, the words of the one who says, 'Were it not for such-and-such, He

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would not have created such-and-such,' do not entail that there is no other great wisdom contained therein; rather, since the best of the righteous from the progeny of Ādam is Muhammad, and his creation was a sought after objective and an intended profound wisdom [greater] than others, it entails that the completion of creation and the pinnacle of perfection was [only] achieved through Muhammad ﷺ.⁷⁷

Directly following this aforementioned extract, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī mentions a few other corroborating narrations that testify to the validity of the hadith of Ādam's *tawassul* ﷺ, which has been omitted here for brevity.

Imam Shaykh al-Islam Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, in his *Fatāwā*, responds to someone who objects to the words of the one eulogising the Prophet ﷺ with 'Were it not for him [the Prophet ﷺ], there would neither have been an orbit nor a ship', claiming that there is no proof from the Book or the Sunnah [for such a notion]:

It is said to him: On the contrary, there is a proof for that, for [it is narrated] in the *Mustadrak* of al-Hākim, with his chain of transmission back to Zayd ibn Aslam from his father, on the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ: 'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Ādam said, "O my Lord, I ask You by the right of Muhammad ﷺ that You forgive me," to which Allah replied, "O Ādam, how did you know Muhammad when I have not created him?" He replied, "O my Lord, when You created me with Your hand and breathed into me from Your spirit, I raised my head and saw written on the legs of the Throne: "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." I then realised that You have not annexed to Your name except the most beloved of creation to You." Allah replied, "You have spoken the truth; he is the most beloved of creation to Me: if you ask Me by his right,

⁷⁷ Ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī, Muḥammad. *Mafāhīm yajib an tushāḥḥah*. 10th edn. Dubai: Dā'irah al-Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1415/1995, 119-128.

I will forgive you. Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created you.” Al-Hākim said, ‘This hadith is rigorously authentic in its chain of transmission, though it has not been narrated by them [al-Bukhārī and Muslim], and it is the first hadith of ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam that I have mentioned.’

Ibn ‘Adī said, ‘His hadiths are authentic (*ḥisān*), and he is of those whom people have tolerated, while some have deemed him to be truthful: he is of those whose hadith are written.’ These are the words of Ibn ‘Adī, while others consider him slightly weak [in his narrations]. Yet al-Bukhārī said [about him], ‘Alī [ibn al-Madīnī] declared him to be very weak.’

These are the words of the Imams, but what ‘Abd al-Rahmān narrated is corroborated by another report; for in the *Mustadrak* of al-Hākim there is the narration of ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ: ‘Allah revealed to ‘Īsā ؑ, “O ‘Īsā, believe in Muhammad, and command whomever amongst your nation lives to meet him to believe in him; for were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Ādam; and were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Paradise and the Hellfire. I have created the Throne on water, and it shook; so I wrote on it: ‘There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’, whereupon it became still.” Al-Hākim said, ‘This hadith is rigorously authentic in its chain of transmission, though they [al-Bukhārī and Muslim] did not narrate it.’

Both the first and the second hadith mentioned by al-Hākim have also been mentioned by al-‘Azfā in *al-Durr al-munazzam*.⁷⁸ Moreover, Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ did not say that except after ascertaining; consequently, it is similar to a hadith that is *marfū‘* [i.e. ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ himself], as there is no room for personal reasoning (*ijtibād*) in such matters.

⁷⁸ The full title of the work is *al-Durr al-munazzam fī mawlid al-nabī al-mu‘azzam* by Abū al-‘Abbās al-‘Azfā (d. 633 AH).

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Furthermore, al-'Azfā and the author of the book *Shifā al-sudūr*, in an abridgement on the authority of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib ؑ, who narrates from the Prophet ﷺ, who narrates that Allah Almighty and Majestic said, 'O Muhammad, by My might and majesty, were it not for you, I would not have created My earth, nor My heavens, nor would I have raised this sky, and nor would I have spread this earth.'

The two above-mentioned compilers have mentioned in another narration from 'Alī ؑ that Allah Most High said to His Prophet ﷺ, 'For your sake, I spread out the plain, mix the water, raise the skies, designate reward and punishment and Paradise and the Hellfire.'

The two above-mentioned compilers have [also] mentioned from 'Alī ؑ that Ādam ؑ said, 'O my Lord! What is this corporal light?' He replied, 'This is the corporal form of the canopy [meaning the throne] from the light of a person from your progeny, whose name in the heavens is Aḥmad and on earth it is Muhammad. Were it not for him, I would not have created you, nor would I have created the heavens and the earth, nor the length and breadth.'

The author of *al-Durr al-munazzam* mentioned that Allah Most High said to Ādam ؑ, 'This is your child Muhammad. Were it not for him, I would not have created you, nor would I have created Paradise and the Hellfire, nor the sun or the moon. This is the one through whose intercession mankind will enter Paradise on the Day of Resurrection.'

Qāḍī 'Iyād mentioned in his book *al-Shifā'* that in another narration [it is stated], 'So Ādam said, "When You created me with Your hand, I raised my head to Your Throne and, lo and behold, there was written on it: 'There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. I then realised that there is no one greater in rank in Your sight than the one whose name You have placed next to Your name." Allah Most High revealed to him, "By My might and majesty, he is the last of the prophets from your progeny; and were it not for him, I would not have created you." This is what

Qāḍi 'Iyād mentioned, and I have expounded upon that in *Nafā'is al-i'timād fī khaṣā'is khayr al-'ibād*.⁷⁹

In summary, the hadith in no way conflicts with any of the core beliefs of Islam. As for those who perceive it being somehow in conflict with the Qur'anic verse: *I only created the jinn and mankind so that they might worship Me* [Qur'an 51:56],⁸⁰ then the aforementioned interpretation of Ibn Taymiyyah—whose opinions these people treat as gospel—suffices as a refutation of such a notion.

⁷⁹ al-Bulqīnī, Sirāj al-Dīn. *Fatāwā al-Bulqīnī*. 1st edn. Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 1435/2014, 943–946.

⁸⁰ Commenting on the words of Imam Ṭaḥāwī's creed 'He is the creator without need', Shaykh al-Bārbartī says, 'Since need is a deficiency that one needs to repel, whereas Allah is the absolutely independent and therefore does not have any need for His actions, Allah Most High said: *Verily, Allah is altogether Independent of [His] creatures* [Qur'an 29:6]. If someone was to say: His act of creating has been mentioned in the Qur'an as being motivated, such as in His Most High's words: *I only created the jinn and mankind so that they might worship Me* [Qur'an 51:56], and hence demonstrates that they had been created for the purpose of worship. We reply: Its interpretation is that [*I only created the jinn and mankind*] was to command them to worship Me and forbid them from disobeying Me, and then reward them for their obedience [to Me] and not disobeying [Me]. Therefore, creating them was for the need of the legally responsible, not for His need, since the benefit returns to them, and He is in no way harmed by [them] leaving that. The above has only been interpreted as such so that lying is not entailed in Allah's speech, as you know that they did not all worship Him.' al-Bārbartī, Akmal al-Dīn. *Sharḥ 'adīdah ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*. 1st edn. Kuwait: Wizārah al-Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1409/1979, 44–45. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nāblūsī says, 'As for His Most High's words: *I only created the jinn and mankind so that they might worship Me*, then it is merely the exposition of the wisdom behind creating [them], so that they are not left idly. He Most High says: *Does man think that he will be left aimless* [Qur'an 75:36]; and that is not classified as [having] a motive, as Allah Most High does not benefit by [creation's] obedience, nor does [the creation's] disobedience harm Him.' al-Nāblūsī, 'Abd al-Ghanī. *Sharḥ al-Sanūsiyyah*, manuscript.

APPENDIX TWO

The Light of the Prophet ﷺ

'ABD AL-RAZZÂQ NARRATES, in his *Muṣannaf*, with his chain of transmission back to Jābir ibn 'Abd-Allāh al-Anṣārī ؓ, that the latter said:

I said, 'O Messenger of Allah—may my father and mother be your ransom—tell me about the first thing Allah Most High created before everything else.' He replied, 'O Jābir, verily Allah Most High created before everything the light of your Prophet from His light. So that light began to revolve by the power [of Allah] wherever Allah Most High willed, and at that time there was no Tablet, no Pen, no Paradise, no Hellfire, no angel, no heaven, no Earth, no Sun, no Moon, no jinn and no human being. Then, when Allah Most High wanted to originate creation, He split that light into four parts: so He created from the first part the Pen; and from the second, the Tablet; and from the third, the Throne. Then He split the [remaining] fourth part into four parts: so He created from the first the carriers of the Throne; and from the second, the Stool; from the third, the rest of the angels. Then He divided that [remaining] fourth part into four parts: He created from the first the heavens; and from the second, the earths; and from the third, Paradise and Hellfire. Then He split that [remaining] fourth part into four parts: so He created from the first the light of the believers' insight; and from the second, the light of their hearts, which is the gnosis (*ma'rifaḥ*) of Allah Most High; and from the third,

the light of their intimacy, which is [acknowledgement of] Allah's Oneness (*tawhīd*): there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah ﷺ.⁸¹

Al-Bājūrī, in his marginalia on the *Mawlid al-Dardīr*, said, 'What is meant by the "light" here is not that which is contrary to darkness, even though that comes to the forefront; rather, what is meant is a reality (*ḥaqīqah*) which Allah Most High created and, due to its preciousness, called a "light", and whose true essence is not known by anyone except Allah Most High.'⁸²

Regarding the words 'Then, when Allah Most High wanted to originate creation, He split that light into four parts', al-Zurqānī explained, in his commentary on *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyyah*: 'Meaning He added to it, not that He split that light which is the light of al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ.'⁸³

Other hadiths have been narrated that corroborate this hadith, including that which has been narrated in *al-Aḥkām* of Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, as mentioned by Ibn Marzūq, from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from his grandfather that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'I was a light before my Lord 14,000 years before Ādam was created.'

Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī cites further proofs that establish the illumination (*nūrāniyyah*) [of the Prophet ﷺ]:

Amongst the proofs that establish this *nūrāniyyah* is His Most High's words: *There has come from Allah a light and a clear Book* [Qur'an 5:15]. Many scholars have said that what is meant by the *light* here is Muhammad ﷺ, as mentioned in

⁸¹ al-Qāsimī, Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Faḍl al-mubīn*. 2nd edn. Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1409/1988, 340-343. Al-Zurqānī said, 'He did not mention the fourth [part] of this part, so refer to the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq, which narrates the remainder of the hadith. Moreover, al-Bayhaqī narrated it with some variance.' al-Zurqānī, Muḥammad. *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyyah*. 1st edn. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, 1417/1996, 1:91.

⁸² al-Qāsimī, Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn, *al-Faḍl al-mubīn*, 340.

⁸³ al-Zurqānī. *al-Mawāhib al-laduniyyah*, 90.

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the *tafsir* works of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥārim and al-Qurtubī. Qatādah said, 'What He means by the *light* is Muhammad' (as cited in *Tafsir Ibn al-Jawzī*).

Amongst those evidences that prove this *nūrāniyyah* is what has been established through multiple chains of transmission regarding when he ﷺ was born and 'his mother saw a light' that emerged from him that illuminated the palaces of Shām. Ibn Ḥajar said, 'That was graded rigorously authentic by Ibn Hibbān and al-Ḥākim' ([as cited in] *al-Mawāhib*).

Another evidence that establishes this *nūrāniyyah* is what has been narrated in the hadith of al-Ṭabarānī: 'and we saw as if light was emanating from his mouth;' and what has been narrated from Ibn 'Abbās: 'When he would speak, it would be seen as if light was emanating from between his front teeth' (al-Zurqānī ascribed this to al-Tirmidhī and al-Dārimī).⁸⁴

The following is a rejoinder from Ustādh Jamāl Fārūq al-Daqqāq—one of the students of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī, in his notes on Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī's *al-Dhakhā'ir al-Muḥammadiyyah*—to those who have expressly criticised Jābir's hadith by claiming that it was a forgery:

A great number of scholars have mentioned this hadith and ascribed it to the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq. The scholars who made such an ascription include, but are not restricted to, al-Qusṭullānī in *al-Mawāhib*, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī in *Sharḥ al-Hamziyyah* and al-'Ajlūnī in *Kashf al-khafā'*.⁸⁵ However, whoever peruses the prevalent published edition

⁸⁴ Ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī. *al-Dhakhā'ir al-Muḥammadiyyah*. Cairo: Dār Jawāmi' al-Kalim, 374-375.

⁸⁵ One can also add al-Suyūṭī in *al-Khaṣā'is al-Kubrā*, although he mentions in *al-Hāwī li al-fatāwī* that the hadith does not have a reliable chain of transmission (which indicates that he did not consider it to be a forgery, otherwise he would not have related it in his *al-Khaṣā'is*).

of the *Musannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq will not find this hadith included therein. Naturally, this caused some to be sceptical about the credibility of this hadith, with them concluding that it is a forgery—and therefore erring. It would have behoved such a person to be cautious in adopting such a stance, and to deliberate and take account of the fact that great scholars and *ḥuffāz* like the aforementioned have been confident to make such an attribution in their works without any correction—and whoever has memorised [a hadith] is a proof against someone who has not memorised. Shaykh Rashīd al-Rāshidī al-Tādhifī mentioned the hadith in his work *al-Sīrah al-maḍīyyah*, and commented, "Abd al-Razzāq narrated it in his *Musannaf*—and the wording is his—and al-Bayhaqī on the authority of Jābir; and Ibn Qaṭṭān declared it to be rigorously authentic."

How, then, is it admissible for anyone to judge the hadith to be forged without [first] knowing its chain of transmission? Whoever judged its wording (*matn*) to be a forgery [on the basis of] imagining that it indicates that Allah is a light with the meaning of brightness and that the Prophet ﷺ is a part of Allah, because he is a part of His light, then this is an incorrect judgement, because the hadith has a sound meaning, which is for the possessive construct ['from His light'] (*idāfah*) to be one of ennoblement (*tashrīf*) and reverence, and not 'from' (*min*) which is for partition (*tab' id*). An example of the former would be His Most High's words: *When I have fashioned him [in due proportion] and breathed into him of My spirit* [Qur'an 15:29]; and His words: *that they should purify My House* [Qur'an 2:125].

It is apparent that what is meant by these hadiths is the exposition of his luminous reality (*ḥaqīqah nūrāniyyah*), not his bodily reality (*ḥaqīqah ṭinīyyah*); so he is the first of creation amongst the lights, even though his appearance and being sent as a messenger was delayed.

Moreover, the fact that the hadith of Jābir is not found in the published edition of the *Musannaf* does not

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necessarily undermine what the aforementioned *ḥuffāz* have said. To elaborate, the *muhaddith* Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī, who critically edited the popular published version of the *Muṣannaf*, noted in its introduction that all of the manuscripts and photocopied editions are deficient. He added that the most extensive edition is that of Murād Mullā, so he requested that whoever come across that edition should add to his.⁸⁶ Consequently, it is not correct to categorically say that the hadith is not found in the *Muṣannaf* until the missing parts are discovered.⁸⁷

For a further discussion, see Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī's *al-Dhakhā'ir al-Muḥammadiyyah* and its footnotes.

⁸⁶ Al-A'zamī's notice (*tanbīh*) to volume one of the printed edition (South Africa: al-Majlis al-'Ilmī, 1390/1970) also states that the Mullā edition of the *Muṣannaf* has 'a slight deficiency' (*naqṣ baṣiṭ*) in its beginning and in the 'opening of the fifth volume' (*fātiḥah al-mujallad al-khamis*).

⁸⁷ Ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī. *al-Dhakhā'ir al-Muḥammadiyyah*, 371-373.

APPENDIX THREE

Eulogising the Prophet ﷺ

DUE TO THE FACT that some people, out of misplaced zeal, seem to consider almost any eulogy of the Prophet ﷺ as blameworthy and excessive praise that borders on polytheism, the following summary of what some of the foremost commentators on the *Burdah* have said in explication of the following verse of Imam al-Būṣīrī has been included for further clarification:

دَعْ مَا ادَّعَتْهُ النَّصَارَى فِي نَبِيِّهِمْ

Set aside what the Christians claimed
for their Prophet

وَ احْكُمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ مَدْحًا فِيهِ وَ احْكُمْ

Then compose what praises of him you
wish, and do so well!

Al-Qusṭullānī said:

[Meaning:] set aside what the Christians claim and said by way of ascribing divinity to the Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ—according to their various opinions regarding that. Rather, say, 'He is the slave of Allah and His Messenger,' and compose well what praises of him you wish, but without claiming what the Christians claimed about 'Īsā ﷺ. It is as if he has said: If you hear any praise of him with the exception of what

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has been mentioned, then judge it to be sound, and do not disbelieve the one who said it.⁸⁸

Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī said:

The meaning [of the verse] is to leave the Christians' declaration about 'Isā and not say that he [Muhammad ﷺ] is Allah; but rather he is Allah's slave and messenger. This is understood from his words ﷺ 'Do not excessively praise me as the Christians did regarding 'Isā the son of Maryam'. What is meant by 'excessive praise' is 'false praise' (*maḍḥ bāṭil*); and those who falsely praised 'Isā claimed that he is the son of Allah Most High—Allah being exalted above that—and took him as a god. This is why he [the Prophet ﷺ] said, 'Say, "The slave of Allah and His messenger." ... If it is said: We do not know of anyone who claimed about our Prophet what they claimed about 'Isā! We reply: They [the Companions] revered him so much that Mu'adh said [to the Prophet], 'I saw men in Yemen prostrating to one another; shall we not prostrate to you?' He replied, 'If I was to command a human being to prostrate before another human, I would have ordered the wife to prostrate before her husband.' Thus, he prohibited them from that which may lead to them worshipping [him]. Furthermore, it is not conditional for the prohibition that the thing prohibited has been committed; but it is merely the prohibition of a matter that may possibly occur.⁸⁹

Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī said:

Praise well, thereafter, with what you wish, namely whatever attributes of perfection and beautiful traits that you want to affirm for him; for even if you were to exaggerate [within the bounds], you will only encompass a minuscule quantity from the vast [whole]. ... Judge well in his praise ﷺ. So do

⁸⁸ al-Qusṭullānī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Mashāriq al-anwār al-mudhiyyah*, manuscript.

⁸⁹ al-Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn. *Hāshiyah al-Burdah*, manuscript.

not ascribe to him that which is mentioned regarding the Christians above, and do not say that he is sent to the Arabs only, as claimed by the 'Īsawī Jews. Rather, tread on the safest and straightest path in praise of him: that he is the slave of Allah and His messenger, and he is His elect one, His intimate friend, His greatest beloved, His noblest Prophet, whom He has preferred over the rest of His creation and has given manifest and hidden perfections that He has not given any one else of His creation; and other such praises that cannot be exhausted and enumerated by the pen and the tongue. ... Moreover, he ﷺ is described with the pinnacle of knowledge and forbearance, perfection in bravery, complete eloquence, and that he is unequivocally the perfect man and the most beautiful of them, the best of them and the noblest of them to the Sovereign Creator, and the like, which no sent prophet nor angel drawn nigh can attain.⁹⁰

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī said:

In praising the Prophet ﷺ, 'Set aside what the Christians claimed for their Prophet', as He Most High said: *The Christians say, 'The Messiah is the son of Allah'* [Qur'an 9:30]; 'Then compose what praises of him you wish, and do so well!' in other words, compose praise of the Prophet ﷺ in a fitting manner, so that you do not say about him that which is impossible.⁹¹

We conclude with the following excerpt from Shaykh Yūsuf ibn Ismā'īl al-Nabahānī's *Jawāhir al-Bihār* on the subject:

[Imam al-Sha'rānī, in his book *al-Yawāqit wa al-jawāhir*, includes the following:] Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn al-'Arabi

⁹⁰ al-Haytamī, Ahmad ibn Ḥajar. *al-'Uddah fi sharḥ al-Bardah*. 1st edn. Dubai: Dār al-Faqih, 1424/2003, 268.

⁹¹ al-Maḥallī, Jalāl al-Dīn. *al-Anwār al-mudriyyah fi madḥ khayr al-bariyyah*, manuscript.

said: 'The Prophet ﷺ only informed us that he is the first to intercede and the first to have his intercession granted so that we may be relieved from fatigue caused by going to one Prophet after another on that very day, and each of them saying, "Myself, myself!" He wanted to inform us of his rank on the Day of Resurrection so that we may patiently remain in our place at peace, until his turn ﷺ comes and he says, "I am for it; I am for it."... Moreover, when he said at the end of the hadith, "without boasting,"—in other words: I am not boasting in my proclaiming to be the master of the progeny of Ādam: prophets and others; rather, I only intended thereby to give you relief from fatigue on the Day of Resurrection due to a preordained promise to me from Allah Almighty and Majestic that I will be the first intercessor and the first to have his intercession accepted—he ﷺ only praised himself because he had a sound motive.'

[Shaykh al-Nabahānī continues:] His being the master of creation will only manifest completely on the Day of Resurrection, whereupon both those who conform and those who oppose, from his nation ﷺ and from all the other nations, will concede to it and behold it. Nevertheless, out of fear that anyone, because of his countless virtues and miracles ﷺ, may believe him to be divine as they do concerning others, he would occasionally say, 'I am only a slave: I sit as a slave sits, and I eat as a slave eats.' At other times, he would say, 'Do not excessively praise me as the Christians did regarding 'Isā. [Instead] say, "The slave of Allah and His messenger."' Moreover, the angel gave him the option between being a king prophet or a slave prophet and he chose to be a slave prophet, saying, '[That] I may go hungry one day and be satiated the other: so when I am hungry, I ask Allah; and when I am satiated, I thank Allah,' and similar hadiths in which he ﷺ expounds the reality of his servitude to Allah Most High and that he is the master of the humble. An example of the latter is his words to a woman who felt afraid of him: 'Relax! I am only the son of a woman from Quraysh who would eat dried meat.'

Know that there is nothing in the beautiful attributes and majestic qualities that he ﷺ, his Companions and those after them enumerated about his noble self that have any hint of the excessive praise which he prohibited ﷺ in his words 'Do excessively praise me!' Indeed, the meaning of excessive praise is to exceed the limits in praise, and there is no hint in the magnificent praise that he ﷺ has been described with which exceeds the limits; for all of it is merely an expression of narrating his true states, mentioning his real qualities and relating what is factual regarding his noble state of affairs ﷺ; and that is in no way considered excessive praise. Imam al-Būṣīrī said:

Set aside what the Christians claimed for their Prophet
Then compose what praises of him you wish, and do
so well!

Ascribe to his essence whatever you wish of honour

Ascribe to his rank whatever you wish of greatness

For verily the Messenger of Allah's merit

Is without a bound that one may express with his
mouth

[...] Notwithstanding his perfect virtues and abundant miracles—to an extent unsurpassed amongst Allah Most High's creation—there is no one who claimed divinity for him ﷺ; and that is because of Allah protecting him and because of him always repeatedly mentioning to them his servitude to Allah and saying [statements like], 'I am a slave'; 'I am only needy (*miskīn*)'; 'O Allah, give me life as someone needy and grant me death as someone needy; and gather me amongst the group of the needy' [...] [This is so] despite certain misguided sects claiming divinity for some of his Companions and those after them, such as our master 'Alī, may Allah be pleased with him and ennoble his face.⁹²

⁹² al-Nabahānī, Yūsuf. *Jawāhir al-bihār*. Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1379/1960, 2:317.



GUARDIAN of the CLOAK

In Defence of al-Būṣīrī's Ode al-Burdah

Loving and praising the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is an essential cornerstone of every believer's faith. This core facet of the faith has manifested itself in the form of beautiful poetic eulogy from his own time until today. For centuries, the *Qasidah al-Burdah* [The ode of the cloak] of al-Būṣīrī (d. ca. 696 AH) has been arguably the most popular eulogising ode of this kind. As such, it has been passed down ever since by successive and countless Muslim communities, by both layperson and authoritative scholar alike. Recent history, however, has witnessed grave accusations emerge against the poem, with claims that some of its lines contain polytheism (*shirk*) and disbelief (*kufr*). This treatise, *Guardian of the Cloak*, is a thorough and scholarly response to such charges.

The author of this work was Shaykh Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī al-Naqshabandī al-Khālidi al-Shāfi'ī (1815–1882). He was originally from Baghdad, but travelled extensively throughout the Muslim world, including the Hejaz, Syro-Palestine, and Egypt. He authored numerous works, in addition to this treatise, including a defence of the four Sunni schools of Islamic law, and a refutation of the Wahhabis and Mahmūd al-Ālūsī.

